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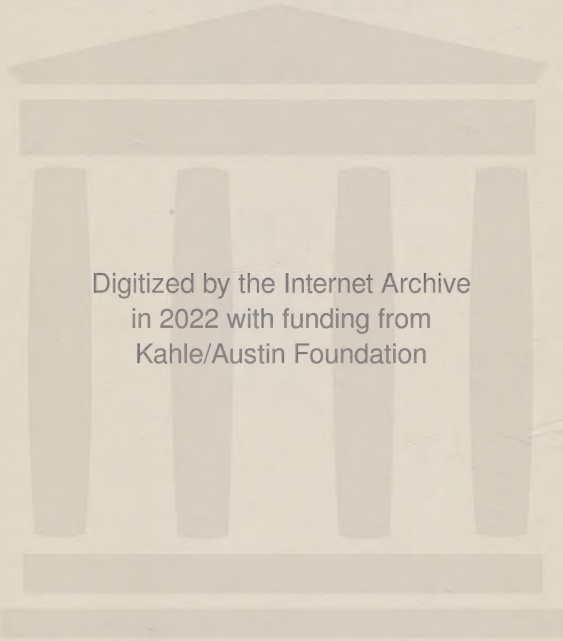
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Jolly Christmas Book

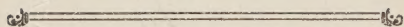
By

WILLIS N. BUGBEE

and others



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Syracuse, New York



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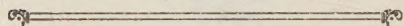


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NOTE

The tunes mentioned in this book may be found as follows:

"The Snowy Blanket" in Nonabel Songster No. 1 (20 cents)
 "Merry Schoolroom" in "Merry Melodies" (25 cents). "Hurrah for the Christmas Tree" and "Deck the Hall with Boughs of Holly" in "Werner's Christmas Book" (60 cents). "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" and "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" in "Golden Book of Favorite Songs" (20 cents).

Jolly Christmas Book



SONGS

The Birthday of Our King

(Tune, "Auld Lang Syne.")

The Christmas time has come again,
The birthday of our King!
Then let the bells ring out for joy
And all the children sing,
And spread the message far and wide
That all the world may hear—
A message full of love and hope,
Of peace and right good cheer.

CHORUS

All hail the joyful Christmas time,
The birthday of our King!
Then ring, ye bells, with all your might,
And sing, ye children, sing!

The wise men saw that star so bright
Judea's hills above,
And guided by its gleaming light
They found the Prince of Love.
Then oh, such joy in Bethlehem
Upon that Christmas morn!
For "peace on earth good will to men"
Was with the Saviour born.

Howdy, Mr. Santa Claus

(Tune, "Wearing of the Green," using last half of air for chorus.)

A jolly man is Santa Claus,
Who comes at Christmas time,
With reindeers sleek and loaded sleigh
And bells that merrily chime;
He drives his reindeers through the air
Upon our roofs so steep,
And down our chimney he will come
When we are fast asleep.

CHORUS

Oh, howdy, Mister Santa Claus,
Oh, howdy, howdy do!
When you come round this Christmas time
We'd like a glimpse of you,
And every time we'd shake your hand
'Twould mean a welcome true—
Oh, howdy, Mister Santa Claus,
Oh, howdy, howdy do!

Old Santa lives up in the north
Amid the snow and ice,
And spends his time in making toys
And other things so nice,
And then when Christmas time has come,
He loads them in his pack,
And brings them to us girls and boys,
Nor ever takes one back.

CHORUS.

Oh, jolly Mister Santa Claus,
What makes you be so shy?
Why don't you show your rosy face,
The twinkle in your eye,
Your whiskers long and white—and say!
We'd like to talk with you;
We'd like to shake your dear old hand
And say a "howdy do."

CHORUS.

RECITATIONS AND MONOLOGUES

Buying Christmas Presents

I am buying Christmas presents
Just like big people do,
Some chocolates for mamma
Are nice, I think, don't you?
For, oh! she loves them dearly
And—well, I love 'em, too.

The Happiest Girl

(Little girl holds doll for inspection.)

Just see this lovely dolly
That Santa brought to me,
And I'm the happiest girlie
That ever you did see.
I hope that all the children
Had presents nice as this.
If I could see old Santa
I'd give him—one big kiss.

The Happiest Boy

(Little boy holds coaster for inspection.)

Just see this dandy coaster
Old Santa fetched to me.
Now all the other fellows
Are jealous as can be,
At least, that's what my mamma
Was telling Mrs. White—
Oh, gee! I do like Santa,
For he's all right!

A Puzzler

Each year old Santa brings to me
Just heaps and heaps of toys;
He does the same for Jimmie Brown
And all the other boys,
But one thing I would like to know
Is what the children did,
And how old Santa fared himself,
When he was but a kid.

I wonder who brought gifts for him
And hung them on the tree,
Or who came down the chimney wide—
That's just what puzzles me.
If all the things that I have heard
'Bout Santa Claus is true,
He's got that old Methusalum beat
A thousand years or two.

A Trick on Santa

(For a little boy.)

I wrote a note to Santa
To bring me lots of stuff,
But of course you know my stockings
Would not be big enough,
So I've borrowed some from mamma—
A pair of them, you see,
And I've sewed them both together—
Some stocking that—oh, gee!

(Holds up stockings which have been sewed together.)

Johnny's Gifts

(Enter Johnny with shopping bag filled with packages.)

I've bought the nicest presents—
Perhaps you'd like to see?
I know they'll all be tickled
To find them on the tree.

(He takes packages from bag and shows gifts as he recites.)

A handkerchief for mamma,
With fringe all 'round the rim;
A pocketbook for papa,
I'm sure will just suit him;
A book for sister Molly;
A ball for brother Ted;
Some spectacles for Grandpa;
A pipe for Uncle Ned;
A rattle box for baby
And pictures to look at;
A knuckle bone for Rover;
A mouse for Pussy cat.

(Holds up toy mouse. Girls in audience scream.)

Ho ho! It's not a real one,
You do not need to fear—
But really I must hurry
Or they will catch me here.

(Hustles to replace packages in bag and then runs off stage.)

Polly's Christmas Dinner

One Christmas morning Polly Brown
Was told she might invite
Some friends to share her Christmas feast,
And maybe stay till night.

Miss Polly gave a merry laugh
And clapped her hands with glee,
And straightway started off pell mell
Her favored ones to see.

And then her mamma baked and baked
All kinds of goodies sweet
To give her little daughter's guests
A splendid Christmas treat.

And when 'twas time for them to eat
The guests did all appear,
And who they were you couldn't guess
If you should try a year.

The first was Tim, the newsie boy,
Too lame to romp and play;
And next was Mrs. Hooligan,
The washerwoman gay;

Antonio, the organ man,
Who grinds his tunes so sweet;
And best of all the popcorn man
That stands out on the street.

But oh! They had the loveliest time;
They ate just all they could;
Then Tony played his finest tunes—
You might expect he would.

And Tim and Mrs. Hooligan
Sang Christmas carols gay,
The popcorn man served popcorn balls,
And then they went away.

And each and all the guests declared
The dinner was just fine,
While Polly said for once she'd had
A really scrumptious time.

Christmas Carol

The earth has grown old with its burden of care,
But at Christmas it always is young,
The heart of the jewel burns lustrous and fair,
And its soul full of music bursts forth on the air
When the song of the angels is sung.

It is coming, Old Earth, it is coming tonight!
On the snowflakes which cover thy sod
The feet of the Christ-child fall gentle and white,
And the voice of the Christ-child tells out with delight
That mankind are the children of God.

The feet of the humblest may walk in the field
Where the feet of the Holiest trod,
This, then, is the marvel to mortals revealed
When the silvery trumpets of Christmas have pealed,
That mankind are the children of God.

—*Phillips Brooks.*

Jennie's Plan

Old Santa brings for me each year
The very nicest things,
Like picture books and jointed dolls,
And skates and toys and rings,
And chocolates and bonbons, too,
And figs and nuts and such—
I'll tell you what I really think,
Old Santa brings too much.

And so I've written him a note
I'll read it if you wait.

(*Unfolds letter and reads.*)

"Dear Santa: When you come this way
Just pass right by our gate,
And take the money you would spend

In buying gifts for me
And give to all the little folks
Who live across the sea.

The children who have lost their homes
And maybe parents dear,
Please don't forget, dear Santa Claus,
Yours truly, Jennie Gere."

(Folds letter and places in envelope.)

There now, I'll have to hurry quick
And get it off today.
And say! *(Pointing to audience.)* It would be awful nice
If you would do that way.

(Hurries off.)

In Luck

Oh, the luckiest boy in the world am I!
I've hung up my stocking, not too high,
On the bedpost, ever so close to me,
And the foot hangs just over my mouth, you see!
And when it is dark, and mamma comes
To put in the candy and sugar plums,
She'll pour and pour, but strange to say,
That stocking will never be full someway;
And I'll tell you why, if you want to know,
There's a great big monstrous hole in the toe.

—The Household.

The Marriage of Santa Claus

Once Santa Claus sobered and said with a sigh,
While a tear added lustre to each twinkling eye,
"Oh! I'm getting so lonely and weary of life,
I need a companion, or better, a wife;
But where could I find one to share my joy

And love, as I love, every girl and each boy?"
He thought and he pondered, this jolly recluse,
Then he shouted, "I have it, 'tis old Mother Goose!"
He was off in a jiffy, he whistled, his sled
O'er the snow like the flight of a sky rocket sped,
And his reindeer snorted, with heads high and haughty,
And trotted along at the rate of two-forty,
So he found the old lady, of course, very soon—
She had just returned from a trip to the moon,
And was fixing her cap, slightly mussed by the ride,
While the cobwebs were thick in the broom by her side.
She was old, she was weakened, she had a great nose,
Yet her eyes were as bright as the plumage of crows,
And her voice, tho' 'twas cracked, had a ring very sweet,
And her dress, tho' 'twas queer, was most awfully neat.
And Santa Claus blushed as he said "How d'ye do?"
The dame courtsied low, and replied, "Sir to you."
"Will you have me!" he prays; "my darling confess."
She hesitates, murmurs, and then whispers, "Yes—
"But my children!" she cries, with the usual pause,
"Why, children, I love 'em," said bluff Santa Claus.

A Surprising Secret

Please, grandpa, let me whisper
A secret in your ear.
You won't tell anybody?
You promise, grandpa dear?

Well, then, mamma is making
A smoking cap for you,
And I said to let me help her
Cause I want to s'prise you too.

But she said I mustn't touch it,
An' I want you, dear grandpa,
To 'member that I wanted
To make it with mamma.

An' you'll call it half my present,
Won't you, grandpa? An' so
Mamma'll jus' be s'prised a little
When she s'prises you, you know.

Rhymes and Chimes for Christmas Times.

'Bout a Million

I like to be a little girl' most all the year,
But if I was a centipede when Christmas time is here,
I guess I'd rather like it—for wouldn't it be fun
To have 'bout a million stockings instead of only one.

Scaring Santa Claus

Do you know what I'd like to do when Santa Claus comes a
knocking?
I'd like to squeeze up a little, and hide behind my stocking.
Then when he opened his pocket, I'd say "Boo!" just for fun.
And maybe 'twould scare him so he'd leave his presents and
run!
O-o-h! wouldn't that be fun!

Overheard at Christmas

"I wish you'd kindly move a bit,
The way you crowd is shocking,"
Remarked the jolly jumping jack,
Deep down in Teddie's stocking.

"Don't tread on me," the orange growled
In muffled tones from under;
I'm sure if people find me sour
'Twon't be the slightest wonder."

"Oh, mercy!" cried the Paris doll,
In tones of deep dismay;
"I see a dreadful chocolate mouse
Not half an inch away."

"Be silent, said the candy cow,
"Do cease this paltry prating,
Such foolish talk I never heard,
Complaining and berating."

But here she ceased, for Master Tom,
The stocking overhauling,
Had gobbled up that candy cow,
Now wasn't that appalling?

—*Jessie B. Sherman.*

The Children's Gift

The wise may bring their learning,
The rich may bring their wealth,
And some may bring their greatness,
And some may bring their health.
We, too, would bring our treasures
To offer to the King;
We have no wealth or learning;
What shall we children bring?

We'll bring Him hearts that love Him,
We'll bring Him thankful praise,
And young souls meekly striving
To walk in holy ways;
And these shall be the treasures
We offer to the King
And these are gifts that even
The poorest child may bring.

'Twas the Day After Christmas

BY LUCILE CRITES

'Twas the day after Christmas, when all thro' the town,
The folks were exchanging their gifts, "gray for brown;"
The handsome young man brought a black and white shirt,
The girl with the slippers so small that they hurt.

The man with cigars that no human could smoke,
("The one who had sold 'em to wife should go broke.")
A large, holly bundle was filled with gay ties,
His sister had sent them—a Christmas surprise!

Rebellious grandmother—house-shoes by the score!
Declared she would scream if she got any more;
She wanted to change 'em for black satin pumps,
" 'Twould teach folks a lesson—the silly young gumps!"

A wife with a box which contained a new hat,
She couldn't endure it, it made her look fat.
The woman whose husband had bought her a gun,
Would like to exchange it, "or money back one."

The man who received handsome furs from his wife,
Would take out insurance, and pay up for life.
The woman who got only three dozen pairs
Of henna silk stockings would exchange 'em for chairs.

The clerks were so tired that they all tore their hair,
The managers offered their business to share
With man or with woman, no matter what name,
Who kept what they got, be it ever so tame.

But no one responded—the risk was too great,
The managers all were left to their fate.
The day after Christmas, no store can arrange,
For that is the day of a wholesale exchange.

The Christmas Doings at Dave Wigginses

A monologue for a lady made up as a typical back-country character.

SCENE: *A plain living room. The speaker is discovered seated in a rocking chair knitting or chocheting.*

Oh, say. Did I ever tell you 'bout the doin's over at Dave Wigginses last Christmas? I didn't? Well, then I'll just have to tell you all about it. You see, Dave's an old bach, about forty years old. What's that you say? Fair, fat and forty? Well, that's jest him exactly. He'd be tolerably good lookin' if 'twarn't for that wart on the side of his nose, an' if his ears warn't so big an' if he had more hair on the top of his head and several other things. What's that? I didn't mean several other things on the top of his head. I mean if several other portions of his physiogramy was different. An' fat? Well, I guess you'd think he was fat if he stepped on your corn same as he did on mine t'other day. You'd think he weighed two ton 'stead of two hundred an' fifty pounds. But I started out to tell you about Dave's Christmas doin's. You see, he's pretty well fixed—Dave is—lives in that big white house on the hill, but 'fraid as death of a gal. Of course that explains why he's an old bach all right. Well, it got to be most Christmas time last year, an' Dave, seein' everybody buyin' presents an' gettin' ready for a good time, got kinder lonesome, I s'pose, so he moseyed down to see his friend Billy Bristol about it. You see Billy's a great chum of Dave's an' as full of fun as a dog is full of fleas. Used to be schoolboys together—Dave an' Bill did. Well, betwixt 'em they hatched up a scheme for Dave to open his house for a sort of party on Christmas, but bein' so kinder bashful, Dave didn't know exactly who to invite, so he made a dicker with Billy to do the invitin' an' he to attend to the rest of the program. That just suited Billy. He started out invitin' the guests an never said a word one way or another 'bout who

he was goin' to invite—jest let him guess. Well, the time came for the party an' Dave was ready for 'em. He'd got Aunt Peggy Johnson to come an' clean the house from top to bottom an' he'd got it all decorated with Christmas fixin's an' the like of that, but he didn't know for the life of him who was comin'. I tell you it was some surprise for Dave when they began to come. First was that old maid—Mehitable Crane. Of course she'd be sure to be the first one anyway. She's set her cap for every single man in town an' some that ain't single, so I hear. Then came the two Miss Primroses—Violet and Pansy—two very eligible young ladies, both of 'em. Next came Miss Daisy Burgess, as plump an' rosy as a pippin' an'—what's that? A regular posy bed? Well, I should say as much. I was jest goin' to say that Miss Burgess brought a cousin of hers that was visitin' her from Chicago—Miss Angeline May Perkins by name—quite pretty she is an' real sensible for a city gal. Well, they kept comin' an' comin' till it seemed as if the whole female population had turned out to the party—that is, the unmarried ones. There wasn't any married folks invited. Well, now, say, if Dave wasn't in a pickle. He didn't dast say his soul was his own. Of course the gals all tried to be nice to him—all tryin' to talk to him at once an' that made it all the worse. I s'pose he felt like sinkin' through the floor. But that Angeline May Perkins showed the most sense of any of 'em. She got 'em all to singin' Christmas songs, an' whilst they was doin' that Dave he sneaked out to the barn an' didn't show up again till the men folks come an' Billy had to go out an' hunt him up. Oh, yes, the men folks came after a while. It was jest one of Billy's tricks. After that they had the most hifalutin' Christmas doin's that was ever known in these parts an'—well, the upshot of it all is—they're goin' to have another Christmas celebration again this year. But Dave's gettin' over his bashfulness somewhat since then—so much so that—would you believe it? Angeline is to be the lucky gal at the Christmas weddin' an' we all wish 'em a host of merry Christmases an' Happy New Years.

Only Thirty-two Shopping Days

NANCY D. DUNLEA

Now John, there are only thirty-two shopping days before Christmas and we must make out our gift list. You know that I don't believe in blowing in a lot of money on foolish gimcracks. But—

How much? Well, let's see—there's Mrs. Seaver—she gave me that lovely lampshade last Christmas and I didn't have a thing for her, and I felt so cheap! And there's my sister, Em, of course, and Emory my nephew.

Your bathrobe for him? Oh, you mean that one you got two years ago with the bilious red and yellow flowers? Well, Emory's in college now, if you think you have to economize on my folks. Yours never send much, I'm sure!

Aunt Mary? Well, she may have worked that soft pillow herself, but it looks to me, as if she got it at a Chinese raffle! I wouldn't give that to my worst enemy!

John, how many times have I asked you to put your ashes in your ash receiver? Mrs. Seaver gave you that, you remember, last year. She says Mr. Seaver finds his so useful!

How much money have I got to have? Well, as I said, there's Mrs. Seaver and sister and Emory and your Aunt Mary, I suppose, and I want to remember all the club ladies—

Oh, there's only nine! It won't have to be anything very expensive—just some little trifle to show that I've thought of them—I may be the next president, you know. I've been making up my mind whether to get some of those little imported perfume novelties. They are awfully dear. They look like grapes, or a box of stationery, or a bracelet, or a dainty handkerchief—real linen of course.

Cost? Oh, John, do have a little Christmas spirit! I've always felt it was more blessed to give than to receive—

Give Mrs. Hardison something? But I've crossed her off our list, for she never gives us anything—not even a ten cent calendar!

Send her a present C. O. D.! That would be a joke!

Count up again? I wish you would try to remember something yourself, John—lean closer to the ash receiver—well, (*wearily*) as I've already said, there's Mrs. Seaver and sister

and Emory—and I think we'd better get a fountain pen for him—a real nice one—and your Aunt Mary, I'll look around the ten cent store for her. I know I can find something there that'll do—and the club ladies—how many does that make?

Fourteen? Well, we've certainly got to hurry! There's only thirty-two shopping days before Christmas, and the crowd is something awful! Mrs. Preston, next door, says already you can hardly get near the candlestick or the handkerchief counter!

Oh, John, I never thought of it before! Do you suppose she's planning to give me something?

You hope not! Well it's no wonder you don't get any fun out of Christmas! I only hope she doesn't give me her left over silk stockings. She gets so many pairs, always, and her feet are much larger than mine.

You think you ought to remember old Mr. Tulliver. Why not send him a card? A man always appreciates that so much, I think!

You thought a jar of my orange marmalade? Yes, it is nice, I made it myself—but I was saving it for the day when the club lunches here. I'd bragged about my recipe. Well, we'll see—

Some remembrance for Mr. Payson? Now see here, John, your employer is a rich man, and he isn't very liberal with you—well I suppose he was, last Spring—but that was because work was slack, anyhow, wasn't it? I'd send him a bill for over-time all this Christmas rush, if I were making him a present!

A present for me! He has! How did you find out? Do you think it's one of those new silver compacts?

Oh, John, don't be stupid! Every woman on the street car uses one! Not for her hair, for her complexion!—Well we might give Mr. Payson a book. I don't think there's a spot on those "Gems from the American Poets," and the leather binding is so good looking, it looks as if it was good reading.

Doesn't appreciate poetry, or books? No, I suppose not—unless it was a bank book!

Fudge—home made fudge? If you aren't the limit! What ever put such an idea as that into your head?

I told Mrs. Seaver I was going to make all my own Christmas presents this year. I meant those that I sew, of course! I have decided to make 'em a set of pink silk lingerie. It won't cost nearly as much—

How much? John, haven't you any Christmas spirit? Must everything be figured in dollars and cents? I am going to try to make twenty-five dollars cover everything, but your present and mine, and something for the maid and your brother out West, if you insist that we include every one of your relatives. I think its far more sensible to remember those who remember us. But you know your relatives have always been very stingy.

They believe in sensible presents? Well that box of potatoes and apples was sensible! But there's nothing very Christmasy, about it!

What do I mean? Why I mean you can't put them on the parlor table with your other gifts.

No, I'm not afraid of their being eaten up, though most of my Christmas candy was last year. I've just made up my mind this year to keep it wrapped up while its on display.

Get kind of stale? It won't be a bit more stale than that box Eunice Timmons mailed me three days after Christmas.

How do I know that? Haven't I got eyes in my head to read the postmark stamped the twenty-eighth?

Now there are only thirty-two days—very little over a month. There are only thirty-two *Shopping Days* before Christmas, John, so if you'll make me a check for thirty-two dollars—

Oh, wait a minute! Did you count after sixteen? And stop looking so frightened, I haven't asked you to help me shop yet! What day will Mr. Payson let you off to go shopping?

Then you ask him the first thing tomorrow. I always feel it isn't right to leave things until the last minute. Things are so picked over, soiled and mussed, you don't get anything for your money, and it makes it so hard for those behind the counter.

The orphans down at the River home? Why, what made you think of them? I provided for them last fall.

I certainly did. What? Why—er—I sorted out your old clothes—

No, of course they couldn't wear them. Nowadays charity is scientific. They salvage the things.

Candy? Oh it would make the poor little things sick! The matron wouldn't allow it! She has her hands full enough as it is with sixty-nine orphans and only room for half.

I said twenty-five dollars, and now I say thirty-two? Well I can't help it! I haven't remembered a soul I didn't have to!

The Christmas Packages

BY KATE ALICE WHITE

(Near the center front of the stage is a small table on which are heaped boxes of various sizes. The boxes are wrapped to look as though they had come through the mail.)

Oh, I'm so tired. *(Drops packages in a chair.)* Nothing is such hard work as Christmas shopping, especially when you work hard picking things out for people and then find out they don't like what you've sent them.

But I'm not like that at all. Even if I do happen to get something that I don't care very much for, I never say anything about it. Why, last year when Aunt Amy sent me that rose colored scarf that was the horriddest thing that I ever saw for anyone to give as a Christmas gift, I didn't say so very much. I only told her that I always did hate scarfs and that rose made me look a fright and that I would lots rather have had something else. And would you believe it, she was as mad as she could be and told me that that was the last thing that she would ever give me.

I hope that she's forgotten it by this time for I got her a new book for Christmas. Aunt Amy doesn't care very much for books but this one was such a pretty shade of blue that I knew she would like it—and, it was cheap, too. I

think blue books are ever so much nicer than red ones. Some way or other they always seem more refined. (*Takes off her hat and coat and then goes to the table.*)

Why, the mailman must have been here. (*Looks over the packages.*) These all seem to be mine. (*Picks up a package and shakes it.*) There's something in it that rattles. I wonder what it is? (*Looks at package.*) It's from Aunt Mary and Uncle John. I do hope the old stingies have sent me something nice this year. Well, this box is too big for a gold pencil, so I know that they haven't sent me another one. (*Looks at the box closely.*) What can it be? (*Examines it carefully and then shakes it.*) I wonder if they took the hint in my last letter and sent me the wrist watch I wanted. (*Looks at the box.*) It's pretty large for just a wrist watch. (*Shakes box.*) But maybe they've packed it well so that it wouldn't be broken.

(*Picks up another box which she looks at carefully.*) I wish I knew what's in this. (*Shakes it.*) It doesn't rattle at all. (*Looks at package.*) It's from Rose and Alice. What in the world can it be? I told Alice last year that I'd lots rather have a box of candy than that queer looking bag that they sent me. And do you know, I don't believe that she liked it. Some folks are certainly touchy when they send such inappropriate gifts. And there I'd worked hard to pick out that beautiful handkerchief that I gave her. I'd made seven trips down town to find the right shade of orchid and she didn't appreciate my efforts at all. She even had the nerve to tell me that she didn't like colored handkerchiefs but always used white ones.

(*Looks in the mirror and powders her nose.*) Shopping is certainly hard on one. I look all worn out. But maybe the exercise has reduced me so that I can eat more for supper tonight. I'm glad that I have the strength of mind to keep from eating so much for I wouldn't be as fat as May is for anything. I told her so, too, yesterday, and do you know the hateful thing didn't even speak to me today when she met me.

(*Draws a long breath.*) Reducing is hard work all right. Just think of the things that you can't eat. I'm glad that I never get candy for Christmas for it would surely be awful

to have it wasted because I am dieting and couldn't eat it. But no one ever did give me candy and they won't this year for I wrote and told every one that I was going on a strict diet so that I wouldn't get too fat.

It surely is awful hard to diet but then I wouldn't be fat for anything. I don't care how hard it is, I'm going to stick to it. I've dieted all day today so I don't see why I can't keep it up. I just ate the littlest bit for breakfast, just an orange, a dish of oatmeal, and only five pieces of toast with a little bit of butter on each piece, and I do love to have my toast swimming in butter, and two eggs, and a cup of coffee. I usually drink two cups of coffee but I was late getting down to breakfast so the cream was nearly gone, and I like plenty of cream in coffee. Oh, yes, and I ate two doughnuts, too. My but they were good!

And at noon I didn't eat much either. Just a very little like I did for breakfast for when I make up my mind to do a thing I do it no matter how hard it is. I haven't eaten a thing since dinner for I was down town and so busy that I didn't take time to have even a hot chocolate. Say, but I'm hungry now, though. I hope that mother has a good supper tonight for I'm nearly starved. (*Shakes another box.*)

This is such a long narrow box. I wonder if it's a string of pearls. (*Looks at box carefully.*) I'm sure that I told cousin Ruth that I wanted pearls. I wonder why they pack things in such big boxes. I suppose they're afraid that the things will be broken because the mails are so big this time of the year. (*Picks up several boxes and examines them carefully, shaking them, etc. At last she unwraps the white paper on one and discloses the inner wrapping.*) They surely wrapped this well. I wonder what it is. (*Looks at it thoughtfully.*)

It's so foolish of mother to want us to wait until Christmas morning to open our packages. (*Looks at package.*) I'm almost sure that these must be the slippers that I wanted. (*Examines package thoughtfully.*) There's no way of telling what's in it without I open it and then mother'll be cross. Why, are old folks so fussy? (*Takes the outside wrappers off several packages.*)

There's no way telling what's in them. (*Draws a deep breath as she picks up a small package.*) I do hope that it's a wrist watch. I wish it was supper time for I'm as hungry as a wolf. (*Looks at the small package.*)

I wonder if mother'd care if I'd just open this package and see if it is a watch. (*Looks at the package.*) I'll open it, and if it isn't a watch I can tie it up again. (*Opens box and starts back in amazement.*) Why—why—(*Opens a second package.*) Oh! (*Opens several packages and looks very disappointed as each is opened.*) What do you know about that! Here, I am on a diet and every one of them has sent me candy. (*Starts crying.*) A—and it'll all be w—wasted c—cause I can't eat it. (*Wipes her eyes.*) And last year when I wasn't on a diet and could eat candy not one of them sent me any.

(*Picks up one of the boxes and looks at it.*) It looks good. I wonder if eating *one* piece would make me any fatter? (*Puts a piece in her mouth.*) Um! that's good! (*Takes another piece.*) That's the best candy I ever tasted. (*Opens several of the boxes and takes out a piece from each one and then eats them.*) This candy is too good to be wasted. (*Her face brightens.*)

I know what I'll do, I'll eat this up and then I'll begin dieting again. (*Looks around.*) I wonder if Harry is around any place. He's so fond of candy that he'll eat every bit of it if I leave it here, but that's the way with little brothers. You can't have a thing around without they get into it. (*Picks up the packages of candy.*)

Well, I dieted all day anyway and just as soon as this is gone I'll start again for I'm sure that I don't want to be as fat as May is.

The Christmas Party at Billy Brown's

(A Reading)

BY MINNIE LEONA UPTON

Billy Brown and his mother, and Snipper, Billy's little fox terrier, live down in Maine, in the country, in a little brown house. You've all been in the country, and know the sort of house I mean—that's been painted, once, a long time ago; but the rain, and the hail, and the snow, have worn the paint all off, except here and there two or three little streaks, that show what color the house was, once—if the paint hasn't faded!

Mrs. Brown takes *in* sewing, or goes *out* sewing by the day; and Billy goes to school, when there *is* any school; and when there isn't—and mornings and afternoons besides—he pulls weeds for the farmers, or shovels snow, according to what time of year it is; and all the year round does chores, and runs errands, and does everything he can think of to help his mother.

He has a fine garden—I just wish you could see the things Billy raises in that garden. And he says that when he goes out to work in it mornings, especially after a rain, it seems as though everything there beckons to him, and says, "Hello, Billy!" Yes, everything—the carrots, and beets, and beans, and peas, and potatoes, and onions, and cabbages, and celery, and cauliflower, and turnips, and squashes, and great yellow pumpkins, big as your head—"big as your head?"—big as six of your heads! My, but they are beauties! Summer before last, there was one bouncing fellow that Billy used to measure with a tape measure every Saturday, to see how much it had grown, just as his mother measures him when he has a new suit—which isn't very often!

Sometimes the farmers pay Billy for his work with chickens, or eggs, or something else that he can't raise in his garden. (But he's going to have a henhouse of his own, next year!) And sometimes they pay him in money. When it is money, every cent is put away in the bank, to help him go to college some day, so that he can get a good education, and take the very best kind of care of his mother. And the chick-

ens, and eggs, and other things, and his garden, help to keep his mother's grocery bill down pretty small—that is, as small as a grocery bill *can* be, these days.

And every little while he tells his mother: "When I'm a man, mother, you sha'n't do sewing for other people—I shall hire other people to do sewing for you. And you're going to have a blue silk dress, and a hat with feathers on it that are all kind of waggly, like Mrs. Deacon Skinner's, and a lot of gloves with much as fifty buttons on 'em—way up; and—and an ortermoble!"

That's the kind of boy Billy Brown is! And all the time, he keeps on working like a Trojan. Of course he plays ball with the other boys, and goes fishing, too, sometimes, because his mother knows, and Billy knows, that "All work, and no play, makes Jack a dull boy"—Jack, or any other boy, or girl!

Summer before last, the peas, and beans, and beets, and carrots, and onions, and potatoes, and cabbages, and cauliflowers, and celery, and turnips, and squashes, and pumpkins, grew so well, that they had plenty all summer, and enough to put in the cellar to last all winter. They had a fine Thanksgiving dinner—just they two, and Snipper—with pumpkin pies, and apple pudding, and plum tarts, and a smallish chicken, which Mrs. Brown roasted so that it tasted like the biggest turkey you ever saw in your life. Bill had earned that chicken by weeding rows and rows of onions. And anybody who's ever weeded onions will readily believe that he *earned* that chicken, and that it *ought* to taste like a twenty-five pound—even a thirty-five pound turkey!

Well, they had a nice time at that dinner, but somehow there seemed to be something lacking. And suddenly, one day, just before Christmas, Billy thought what it was. He burst into the kitchen with an armful of wood, and dropped it into the box "bang!" he was so excited.

"Say, mother, *I* know what was missing Thanksgiving Day—'twas *folks*—company—somebody besides us! And can't we invite somebody for Christmas? You know that little skinny turkey that Deacon Skinner said was too small for any use Thanksgiving time. Well, I've been feeding

that turkey up—yessir!—till you wouldn't know 'im! And mother, I've *earned* 'im! We can have 'im for Christmas dinner. And can't we invite somebody—*can't* we?"

Mrs. Brown straightened up from her sewing, and smiled, like the sunshine coming in when you pull up a curtain—quick!

"Of course we can, Billy—of course we can! I'd been thinking of it ever since Thanksgiving, but I was hoping you'd mention it first, since 'twas your turkey—only all the time I didn't suppose 'twould be anything more than a nice chicken!"

"It's your turkey just as much as mine, mother! Everything that I earn is—don't you ever forget that! And now say—you know Rosy Brimmer and Johnny Brimmer that live at the Jones's. And you know Rosy's sprained ankle. Well, it isn't nearly well, yet, and I've just found out that she's got to stay home, while the Jones's go off somewhere to Christmas. And of course Johnny'll stay with her. Now wouldn't they be about the right ones? Johnny and I could haul Rosy up on my sled."

"Good, Billy, good! Just the thing!"

"Oh, and there's Mary Maloney, the Jones's new hired girl. She could come too?"

"Of course! Who else?"

"You say, mother. It's your turn to choose."

"Well, what do you say to Aunt Chloe Jenkins. It is her first year there at the poorhouse, you know, and I'm afraid the others aren't as social with her as they might be, and it seems as though she wouldn't have a very Merry Christmas."

"Just the thing! I like Aunt Chloe. She's all right. My work's all done up. Mayn't I go and invite 'em right off?"

"The sooner the better, Billy. Today's Monday; and with Christmas coming Wednesday, there's no time to lose."

So off Billy started, with Snip at his heels. Snip had been listening all the time, with one ear cocked forward, and the other tipped back, and his tail thumping the floor, hard, every time something was decided. You know how hard a little

stubby fox terrier tail *can* thump the floor—when it's happy. And we folks who believe in dogs *know* that he understood a whole lots about those Christmas plans—don't we?

Well, away went the two for their sled, and off they coasted, down the hill—Snipper sitting up very straight in front of Billy—to invite Johnny and Rosy, and Mary Maloney. Weren't those folks pleased? Johnny turned three handsprings, and landed under the table. And Rosy clapped her thin little hands and hugged Snip, while he kissed her pale little face all over. And Mary Maloney just sank into a chair, murmuring: "Praise the blissid saints! It had looked loike we'd be afther havin' a dhrairy Christmis—the choildher an' mesilf. But now iverything wull be all roight! We'd planned to loiven things oop a bit wid a shmall Chris'mis three for the tree av us. Cud we fetch the three too? Wud yer moother be agrable to ut?"

"Course she would! I know mother. Now I'll have to hurry along to invite Aunt Chloe. Come on, Snip!"

Off they raced, this time up a long hill, to the poorhouse. They found Aunt Chloe Jenkins picking over beans, with tears running down her plump brown cheeks.

"Morning, Aunt Chloe!" sang out Billy, while Snip rushed up to her and kissed, over and over, the kind hands that so often had fed him, when Aunt Chloe had been strong and well, and lived in a little house of her own, and earned a good living, by washing and scrubbing. Aunt Chloe tried to smile, but it was a sort of wet smile, not very shiny.

"Mawnin' Billy. How's youall, dis mawnin'?"

"Firstrate, thank you, Aunt Chloe. And we want you to come to Christmas dinner, and there'll be a tree afterwards, and—"

"Praise de Lawd! Praise de good Lawd! Ah was jes' a-layin' out fer to hev a mighty mizzable, ornery Chris'inis! Come? Ah'd come ef ah hed ter crawl on dese yer ole han's an' knees!"

"I'm afraid it'll be rather a hard walk for you, anyway, Aunt Chloe."

"Oh, no. Ah'se right peart about trompin' cross kentry! Don' you worry 'bout me—ah'll sho be dar!"

"All right! Goodbye, Aunt Chloe."

"Goo'bye, Billy—bress yo deah heart!"

Then Billy and Snip hurried home to help, for there'd have to be busy times up at the little brown house, from then till Christmas—mincemeat to chop, raisins to stone, the big bouncing pumpkin to peel for pies, and, last but not least, that wonderful turkey to prepare. All this besides a whole lot of sewing that Mrs. Brown had on hand, and a whole lot of chores that Billy did each day for Deacon Skinner. Yes there certainly was plenty of work and some to spare. But wasn't it fun!

Christmas Day dawned bright and clear, but about eight o'clock the sky clouded over, and by nine o'clock it was snowing hard, and blowing in a decidedly business-like way. Billy came home from Deacon Skinner's looking worried.

"Say, mother, how will Aunt Chloe ever get here in such a storm? Johnny and I could haul her on my sled—we're plenty strong enough—but she's so sort of—er—wide! Say—don't you suppose Johnny and I could fasten our sleds together, side by side, so she'd ride real comfortable?"

"Good for you, Billy-boy! Of course you could! I'll put on cushions, and I think—"

Just then there was a great stamping of feet on the steps, and merry voices outside, and Billy rushed to the door. There was Johnny, with Rosy on his sled. And there was Mary Maloney, hugging the Christmas tree!

"An' shure, Missus Brown, we thought we'd bist bring oop the three in ixtra good sayson, before the shnow shud be over oor hids. We're goin' roight back now; and at a fash-nibble oor we'll rayturn, an' prisint oorsilves in proper shtoyle!"

"You'll do no such thing, Mary Maloney! It's much nicer to have you come early, anyway. You'll stay, right now!"

And that's just what they all did. And Johnny and Billy were working hard, tying their sleds together to make a safe vehicle for Aunt Chloe, when there was a rap at the door. Billy threw it open. There stood Aunt Chloe herself, carrying a big green umbrella in one hand, and a vast red-and-green-and-purple carpet-bag in the other! Panting, and puffing, but all one big, happy smile.

"Heah ah is, chillens, heah ah is! Ah'se sho good at trompin', jes like I tole Billy heah! But ah *ain't* right peart at wadin', so ah tought ah'd best tek mah ambril, an' mah bag, an' arrive at mah desperation, befo' de snow got up to mah wais'!"

Aunt Chloe had long ago ceased to have a waist, being all the way of one bigness! But nobody thought of that. They all clustered about her, closing her umbrella, unpinning and untying her purple hood, and red-and-blue shawl, and brushing off the melting snow, and she explained, that she had seen Deacon Skinner early that morning, when he called at the poorhouse with some supplies, and that he had told her he would call for her and take her home, that evening, at nine o'clock. So that was settled.

Meanwhile, Snip had been sniffing curiously at the red-and-green-and-purple carpet-bag, that Aunt Chloe had put down on the floor by the stove. Suddenly it began to wiggle. "Meow! Meeowww!" Snip jumped back to a safe distance. Aunt Chloe laughed joyously. "Dat ar is Seraphiny. Seraphiny's all ah've got; an' ah lowed she'd be mightly lonesome widout me, so ah jes brung 'er right along." She opened the bag, and out popped a sleek black-and-white-and-yellow head, with big, bright, defiant eyes. And when those eyes caught sight of Snip, who had edged up close to the bag again—"Ssssss!" Snip escaped by a swift somersault, and then righted himself, and sat looking inquiringly at everybody, as much as to say: "What on earth did she do that for?"

You see, Seraphina had never been visiting before, in all her little life, and so she had absolutely no company manners. But Snip was too much of a gentleman to try to get even with a guest. And, as it "takes two to make a quarrel," why, there just wasn't any.

Just then Aunt Chloe caught sight of the two sleds tied together.

"Wha' dat for, chillen?"

Billy blushed and stammered, "Oh, that's—that's—"

"Foh to goodness! Ah bliebes you two boys was a-plannin' to come ober foh me! An' haul me ober to Chrismis! Now tell de truf, an' shame de debbil—ain' ah guess right?"

Then they had to own up, and Aunt Chloe insisted upon putting on her hood and shawl again, and being drawn once around the yard, laughing like a big, jolly cherub. "Jes' to see," she explained, "how it seems to ride in mah own private kerridge, jes' like Queen Victory! Ah clar for't—dis am a heap moh fun dan Deacon Skinner's sleigh. Dar—dat'll do!" She allowed the boys to assist her to her feet, and stood a moment on the door step.

"'Twas mighty good an' smart ob you, Billy, to tink ob dat. Some day yo's gwine to be President—or eben praps a Mefdis Pistocal Bishop! An' now, Miss Brown, gimme sumpin to do. Jes' yo say de wud, an' ah'll take de sponser-bility ob seein' dat ar tukkey git roasted jes' like ah use ter roast 'em when ah wuz cook foh Mis' Kunnel Jedge Appleby!"

So Aunt Chloe was given charge of the turkey. The biggest armchair was drawn up close to the stove, and there she sat, a picture of blissful importance.

Then Mary Maloney declared that "Ivery cat shuld be after ketchin' moice"—in other words, that there must be no idle hands in that kitchen. So Johnny and Billy set to work popping corn, and as soon as some was popped, Rosy began stringing it for the Christmas tree, and Mary Maloney took gorgeous red paper, and covered the box in which the tree stood, in the sitting-room, behind a screen. And whenever anybody thought that nobody else was lookin, he, or she, stole in behind the screen, and hung mysterious packages on the tree. All but Aunt Chloe! She could not leave her post of duty for one moment! But she beckoned Mrs. Brown to her side, and gave her numerous brown-paper parcels, which she fished out of a huge pocket in her skirt, and told her, in a hoarse stage whisper, to "Put eb'ryting in 'em on de tree."

"Ut's sorry oi am that we do be lackin' candles to dicorate the three," mourned Mary Maloney, "but we'll jist shmoile an' do widout!"

Aunt Chloe, "shmoiled," and looked at Mrs. Brown, who "shmoiled" back—but no matter about that, now. They all were so busy that if it had not been for the delicious dinnery

smells that began to fill every nook and corner they would almost have forgotten that it was dinner-time.

But oh, it was a happy group that gathered about the table in the kitchen of the little old brown house—fatherless Billy, and his widowed mother; and Johnny and Rosy, with neither father nor mother; and Aunt Chloe, who had outlived all her old friends, and had not a relative in the world; and Mary Maloney, far from the little green island where her heart still clung! Yes, all happy because, on this birthday of the Christchild, His spirit of loving and giving filled all their hearts, and so there was no room for discontent or sadness.

For a moment all heads were reverently bowed, while Mrs. Brown asked the blessing of the Heavenly Father, and thanked Him for all His gifts—most of all the gift of His dear Son, who had left Heaven to come to earth as a little child, bringing Heaven's joy, and peace, and good-will.

It would take too long to tell you all about that dinner—how perfectly Aunt Chloe had roasted the turkey, just as she used to do for Mis' Kunnel Judge Appleby; and how skillfully Mary Maloney carved it, and how delicious were the potatoes, and onions, and squash, and carrots, and turnips, and celery, that Billy had raised; and what a success Mrs. Brown's pudding was, and how everybody had a second piece of pie; and what a lovely centerpiece Rosy had made for the table out of the evergreens and red berries that Johnny had tramped two miles to find, in a particular place in the woods. Everybody told stories, and cracked jokes, and popped conundrums, over the nuts, apples, and raisins. And by the time dinner was over it was time to draw the curtains, and light the lamp. And then everybody put on aprons and helped do the dishes.

Then all went into the sitting-room; and all the others stood holding their breaths, while Billy and Johnny lifted the screen away from the Christmas tree. And then everybody said "O-o-o-o-h-h!" All but Mrs. Brown and Aunt Chloe *They* had known, all the time, that one of the packages in Aunt Chloe's pocket had held candles, lovely Christmas candles, dozens of them, that she had saved ever since she had

been cook at Mis' Kunnel Jedge Appleby's! Red and yellow, pink and green, they shone, and twinkled, all over the tree, like friendly stars.

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And just then Mrs. Brown struck up an old Christmas carol, "Joyful, Joyful Christmas, Everywhere," which they all sang—all except Aunt Chloe, who did her part by vigorously beating time, and Mary Maloney, who was smiling happily, and wiping her eyes at the same time, thinking of Christmas in the old home so far away. "Joyful, Joyful Christmas, Everywhere!" they sang. Yes, that's one of the wonderful things about Christmas, isn't it? It's *everywhere*! All over the wide world, even in places where once little children were sacrificed to senseless idol gods, they keep the birthday of the blessed Christ Child!

Well, maybe there wasn't *everything* on that tree, but it seemed to the happy people around it there was *almost* everything. All who could, had opened their thin pocket-books and bought something for somebody else; and then there were the nicest things, made out of almost nothing, by skilful, loving fingers; and Aunt Chloe had explored through her bags and bandboxes until she had found a present for everyone there. Rosy had so many things that they overflowed from her blue gingham lap as she sat in the rocking-chair with pillows around her. Best of all, she thought was a quaint little pink-cheeked doll that had belonged to Aunt Chloe's little mistress, "Befoh de wah." Even Snip and Seraphina had presents. Seraphina's was a bunch of catnip; and she made her mistress very proud by marching up and picking out her own present the very first thing, which no one else was smart enough to do! And Snip's was a bag of pink peppermints, and he nearly thumped his tail off, on the bare floor, out of sheer happiness!

When all the presents had been distributed, they gathered around the little old melodeon, and Mrs. Brown played Christmas hymns, and carols, and they all sang—or hummed when they didn't happen to know the words—till they heard bells, and there was Deacon Skinner, and they all realized suddenly that it was time to go home, though they could hardly believe it. Then, such a scrambling, to get into coats,

and shawls, and caps, and hoods so not to keep the kind old deacon waiting out in the storm!

Aunt Chloe turned to Mrs. Brown, with a shining face looking out from her purple hood:

"Honey, ah was sho expectin' to be down, down, down, in de Valley ob Mizry dis day. But yo' an' Billy has lifted me up to de top ob de Mount ob J'y an' Tanksgibin'!"

And Johnny said: "You'd better believe Rosy an' me won't forget this day in a hurry!"

And Rosy smiled so that she didn't need to say anything.

And Mary Maloney kissed Mrs. Brown on both cheeks, and squeezed both her hands, and quavered: "An' shure, mum, you an' yer blissid bye has hilped me this day to raaly raalize what Chris'mis means!"

Then Deacon Skinner bundled them everyone into his big sleigh, and they drove out of the yard with happy goodbyes.

And as they jingled merrily down the hill, a song came floating back through the whirling snow: "Joyful, Joyful Christmas, Everywhere!"

EXERCISES

Santa's Helpers

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

SECRET SERVICE MEN, any number of small boys wearing uniform caps, coats with brass buttons, etc.

TOYMAKERS, any number of girls and boys. The girls wear small white aprons and white caps. The boys wear work aprons and visored caps.

AVIATORS, two or three small boys with aviator caps, goggles, etc.

SANTA CLAUS wears typical costume.

SCENE: *Santa Claus' workshop. The Secret Service Men are busy writing in books. Toymakers are sewing, pounding, etc. All may be singing as curtain rises.*

SECRET SERVICE MEN:

Do you wonder how old Santa knows

The good little girls and boys

That he may fill their stockings full

Of trinkets and candy and toys?

Well, here is the way he finds them out—

We'll whisper the secret true:

(Hold hand at side of mouth as if not wishing others to hear.)

We're Santa's secret service men

And we watch what children do.

And then we mark down in our books

The good ones and the bad,

So if they've all the year been good,

At Christmas they'll be glad.

Well, then along 'bout Christmas time—

Within a day or so—

We take our books to Santa Claus,

So he'll know where to go.

FIRST S. S. MAN (*looking at book*)—

Here's Sammy Smith, who minds his ma
And splits the kindling wood,
And does the chores about the house—
We've marked him down as "good."

SECOND S. S. MAN—

And here's the name of Dora Dunn,
So good and kind and sweet;
A pleasant word for everyone
She meets upon the street.

THIRD S. S. MAN—

And here's another girl that's good—
Her name is Susan Snow.
She helps to wash the dishes up
And sweep and dust and sew.

FOURTH S. S. MAN—

But in our "bad" book we have placed
The name of Billy Bing,
Because he tells such awful fibs
And swears like everything.

FIFTH S. S. MAN—

And Jimmy Jones, who shoots the birds
That sing up in the tree,
And chases cats and stones the dogs—
He's bad as he can be.

SIXTH S. S. MAN—

And here is Matilda McIntyre—
She, too, is very bad,
'Cause when her mother asks for help
She pouts and looks so mad.

S. S. MEN (*together*)—

So that's the way we keep account
Of every lass and lad.
Of course the "good" book has more names
Than the ones that's really bad.

(An interval during which pianist plays lively tune and all on stage are busy at work.)

TOY MAKERS (*together*)—

Do you wonder where old Santa gets
His presents every year—
The dolls and drums for little folks
That fill their hearts with cheer?

We'll tell you, tho' you ought to know—
We make them in his shop,
And every day and all the year
We work and never stop.

GIRLS (*holding dolls of foreign lands*)—

Now here are dolls that we have made,
Which may look odd to you.
But Santa knows what girls they'll please
And where to take them to.

BOYS—

And here are carts and jumping-jacks,
And lovely horns to toot.
And here's a popgun for some boy—
Just see how far 'twill shoot.

(He pretends to shoot gun and hits girl in head. She jumps and screams "Oh!" Other boys operate toys mentioned. An interval as before, with music. Enter Aviators.)

AVIATORS—

Do you wonder how old Santa gets
Around so very spry
And never seems to make mistakes
Or passes children by?

We'll tell you how the trick is done—
He travels through the air,
And we're his aviators bold—
We take him everywhere.

Our aeroplane is waiting now
To take him on his way.

(Sounds outside.)

Hark! Here he comes! We know his voice,
So cheery and so gay.

(Enter Santa.)

SANTA—

How, now my merry workers all?

WORKERS—

We're ready for the start.

SANTA—

Then put these toys into my sack
And I will soon depart.

(Toymakers put toys into sack.)

S. S. MEN *(handing books)*—

Here are the names, old Santa dear.

SANTA—

Well done, my trusty men!
And now good-night!

ALL—

Good-night! Good-night!
Till morning comes again.

(All sing Santa Claus song as Santa and aviators exeunt.)

CURTAIN,

Christmas Customs

BY MAE CURRIER MINARD

For four children nine or ten years of age, either boys or girls.

ALL.

The Holly, fir and mistletoe,
And yule log's fire of cheer,
All help to make our Christmas bright
Through each succeeding year.
But how these customs came to be
Perhaps you'd like to know,
For all were handed down to us
From the misty long ago.

FIRST CHILD (*carrying a small well-trimmed and lighted Christmas tree*).

The Teutons in the Ancient times,
Took a fir tree from the sod,
And dressed it up to please the sun
Which they worshipped as a god.
They put on lights for lightning bright,
While nuts and apples gold
Were the moon and stars; toy animals
Of sacrifices told.

SECOND CHILD (*carrying a branch of holly*).

The holly we hang at Christmas time,
To the faithful Druids of old,
Was a sign of love, good-will and peace;
And when winter days were cold,
The sylvan spirits of good, they thought
To the green boughs flocked and clung;
So good-will and peace were in the home
Where the holly branches hung.

THIRD CHILD (*carrying a spray of mistletoe*).

A sacred plant was mistletoe
In German and Druid land,
Each winter time it had a part
In ceremonies grand.
The Celts thought it a magic plant,
And gathered some each year,
To ward off harm and keep them well
While winter days were drear.

FOURTH CHILD (*carrying a short section of round wood
to represent the yule log*).

The Ancient Saxons and the Goths,
Made bright the winter long
By the burning of a yule log huge,
Mid laughter, joy and song.
The yule was thought to sanctify
The home, and bring content;
And days of hospitality
Around the fire were spent.

ALL.

These customs still are much the same
As in the long ago,
For Christmas brings the holly, yule,
The fir and mistletoe.
But the spirit of it all has changed
Since our dear Saviour's birth;
We hang our evergreens for Him
Who gave us peace on earth.

The fourth child places the yule log in a little fire place that has been arranged at one side of the stage; the first child sets his Christmas tree near one side of the fireplace, and the second and third children hang their holly and mistletoe over the hearth.

Bright Stars, Christmas Stars

BY CAROLYN R. FREEMAN

FIRST CHILD.

Bright stars, Christmas stars,
Shining in the sky,
Seem to whisper softly
To each passerby,
"Heaven's little candles,
We are shining bright and clear,
Just to give to everyone
A world of Christmas cheer."

SECOND CHILD.

Bright stars, Christmas stars,
Tell a story old,
Of the shining angels,
And their harps of gold.
Wondrous were the visions
In the radiant sky of blue,
For heaven's portals opened wide,
And heaven's light shone through.

THIRD CHILD.

Bright stars, Christmas stars,
Shone o'er Bethlehem town,
On the night the Christ Child
Unto earth came down.
One star that was brightest,
Always shining overhead,
Led the humble shepherds
To the lowly manger bed.

ALL.

Bright stars, Christmas stars,
Shed your silvery light.
Shine again this yuletide
As on that Christmas night.
Send the light of heaven
Into every waiting heart,
Bringing holy Christmas peace
That never will depart.

DRILLS AND PAGEANTS

The Fancy Festoons

(March and drill for eight, twelve or sixteen girls.)

All dress in white, the gowns having low neck and short sleeves. The stockings should be white; low black shoes should have large red rosettes. Wear across the forehead and around the head a band of black ribbon with a rosette of red at each side of head, reaching from one rosette to the other across the back of head, have strips of red crepe paper, half an inch wide, falling down like a veil, twenty inches long at the sides, longer in the center.

Around each wrist wear a double ruffle of red crepe paper and around the upper edge (nearest the elbow) have a long red paper fringe that reaches from wrist to elbow when the arm is raised. Long narrow red festoons are sewed in a bunch at each shoulder, back and front, brought down to waist line, where they are sewed with space between each streamer, then allowed to fall to bottom of skirt.

While inexpensive and easily made, this costume makes a very showy and attractive drill.

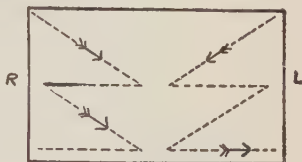
To lively music the girls march in, single file, half at the right corner of back, half at the left. Those from the left pass diagonally across to right corner of front, turn sharply and march back to the left corner of back, while those from the right pass to left corner of front, turn and double back to the right corner of back. As the files cross at center of stage those from the right pass in front of the corresponding member on the left. During this march the tips of fingers of right hand rest on the right shoulder, those of left hand on the left shoulder, the elbows held high.

From corners of back the files pass almost to center of back, come up the stage to front, keeping a three-foot aisle between the lines; at the front turn sharply and double back just outside of the line of march used in coming forward. Go to back of stage, those on left, out to left corner of back,

others to right corner. During this march hands are held as above. On reaching corners of back the files pass as shown in diagram 2, the hands being raised, the fingers meeting above top of head, elbows pointed slightly to the front.



I
FRONT



II
FRONT

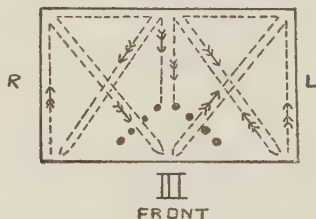
From the right and left corners of front the files pass down the sides, meet at the center of back and form in single file, those from the right stepping into line back of the corresponding member on the left. The file comes up to center of stage, turns squarely, passes out to the center of right side, turns sharply and doubles back to the center of stage, continuing over to the center of left side; turn and double back to the center of stage, and come up to the center of front. During this march the tips of fingers are to rest upon the hips, the elbows being held high, the palms of hands toward sides of body.

At the center of front the first girl goes to right, second to left, and so on, files passing out to corners of front and down sides, then forming two lines across back of stage, facing the front, those from the right being on the front row. Come up the stage abreast, those on front row having fingers resting on shoulders, those on the back line having hands raised, fingers joined above head. At the front of stage the lines halt with those on back row close behind corresponding member on the front. Girls on the back stand just a little to the right of the girl ahead; all raise hands; girl on back joins hands with the one in front of her, right hand with right of other girl, and left with left. As front row halts they should spread apart somewhat, so there will be space between each couple. Faces of two of each couple should be close together. They sing gaily:

(Tune, "O, Little Town of Bethlehem.")

Perhaps you wonder why we're here,
 Perhaps you wonder why;
 It is because the Christmas day,
 Glad Christmas draweth nigh;
 We hope it will ensnare you
 With all its mystic sway,
 And we are here to wish for you
 A Merry Christmas Day.

The girls on the front line face the right side, pass out to corner of front and down the right side, while the others face the left, pass to left corner of front and down the left side, each girl holding her hands clasped at center of breast. From corners of back the files come up to center of front, double back to corners, then to center of back, up to corners of front, double back to center of back, come in couples up to center of stage, then those on right pass diagonally toward right corner of front, the others toward left corner front and halt to form a wedge, as shown in diagram 3.



As they halt in wedge the girls spread apart, to have space between them, and each clasps hands back of her head, elbows pointed to the front. They sing:

From happy homes the lights shine forth,
 And loving thoughts are sent,
 That all may have a rightful share
 Of peace and sweet content;
 The goodwill of the ages
 Calls out its greeting gay,
 And we are here to wish for you
 A Merry Christmas Day

Those on the left half of wedge come up to the left corner of front, while the others come up to the right corner; the files meet at the center of front, forming couples, joining the inside hands and holding them raised and pointing slightly forward. The couples pass down the center of stage, go from center of back diagonally to the center of right side, across the stage to the center of the left side, then diagonally to the center of back. Come up to the center of stage where those on the right side go to the center of right side of stage, the other member of each couple going to the center of left side. The files pass from center of side down to back corners, then line up across the back of stage in two rows, facing the front, those from the right being on the front row. When couples separate the hands are held on hips. They march up the stage, those on each row joining hands and holding them forward, raised high.

They come up until first row is almost to front; those on this line kneel, each girl laying the palm of the right hand against the palm of the left and holding her hands raised at the left of her face. Those on the second row stand just back of the kneelers, the hands raised and held at the right of the face. They sing:

Perhaps you wonder why we sing,
Perhaps you wonder why;
Because our hearts are full of joy
When Christmas draweth nigh;
We want to pass our joy on
'Till all the world is gay,
And that is why we wish for you
A Merry Christmas Day.

Those kneeling rise, those on front pass to right corner, the others fall into line back of them, hands on shoulders. Pass around the stage, single file, then off at the corner of back.

A Christmas Flag Drill

For six boys and six girls. May be presented by either twelve girls or twelve boys.

The girls should wear light dresses. The flag bearers should wear sashes of national colors; the wreath bearers should wear sashes of Christmas colors.

MARCH:

Enter six girls at R., rear, with wreaths of evergreen held in front of face.

Enter six boys at L., rear, with flags held perpendicular. Girls march to L., back to R., thence to L. again.

Boys march in reverse order.

Boys and girls turn and march to rear at opposite sides of stage.

Take positions as per diagram, standing eighteen inches apart in the row.

Girls advance to line with boys.

X
X
X
X
X
X

R O O O O O O O L

FRONT

X=Boys; O=Girls.

DRILLS:

1. All sway wreaths and flags to right four times.
2. Sway to left four times.
3. Girls raise wreaths and rest upon head, holding with both hands. Advance one step.
4. Boys hold flags directly back of partner's wreaths.
5. Girls move wreaths to right four times. Boys follow same movements with flags, holding the relative position of flags and wreaths during the performance.
6. Move wreaths and flags to left four times.
7. Resume original positions of wreaths and flags.
8. All advance to front of stage, girls keeping one step in advance of boys.
- 9-14. Repeat movements 1 to 5.
15. Girls retreat one step as boys advance one step.
- 16-17. Repeat 1 and 2.

18. Girls to L.; boys to R.

19. Girls march around to form a circle at center of stage.
Boys march in a larger, outer circle.

20. Continue the march, boys and girls marching in opposite directions, one circle within the other. March twice around.

21. All turn facing center of circle.

22. Girls touch wreaths at center. Boys bend flags toward center.

23. Hold flags and wreaths in this position and swing once around.

24. Resume original position of flags and wreaths.

25. Reverse order of march and revolve twice.

26. Break circles and march to positions as per diagram.

27. Girls advance one step and halt.

28. All advance to front.

29-34. Repeat movements 1 to 6.

35. Hold wreaths and flags in front of chest.

All may join in singing the following song to the tune of
Merry Schoolroom.

- The evergreens and flags today
(1) Their lovely colors blend;
(2) The evergreens a message bring
Of love that ne'er shall end.
(3) The stars and stripes where'er they float,
On land or on the sea,
The emblem is of loyal hearts—
Of people brave and free.

- Then keep the flags and evergreens
(4) Together side by side,
And let their colors blend in one
Upon this Christmastide,
For on this day long, long ago
The Prince of Peace was born,
Who taught equality of man,
And tyranny to scorn.

MOVEMENTS:

1. Girls hold wreaths forward while boys hold flags just back of them.

2. Boys return flags. Girls hold wreaths aloft.
3. Boys wave flags.
4. Same as 1.

MARCH:

Partners form in double file, turning to L. All turn and march across the stage and off at L. During final march the flags should be held just back of wreaths.

CURTAIN

The Spirit of Christmas Time

(A pageant for any number of children.)

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS TIME, a girl wearing a white gauze dress adorned with sprigs of evergreen, or with red and green ribbons. She wears a crown of evergreen.

WISE MEN (3), dressed in costumes of Bible times.

SANTA CLAUS, in familiar costume.

BROWNIES (any number), wear long pointed caps with tops turned over, short, close-fitting jackets and trousers, pointed shoes.

FAIRIES (any number), dressed similar to **SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS TIME**, but without crowns. Hair hangs loose.

CHILDREN as follows:

For Star and Taper Drill (10 or 20). All are dressed in white and carry lighted tapers.

Picture Bearers (2 or 3), dressed in white, and carrying large picture of "Madonna and the Child."

Bell Ringers (any number), wearing red dresses and carrying small bells.

For Christmas Tree Drill (any number), dressed in green and carrying small Christmas trees. Another effective costume is made by taking old dresses of dark color and covering them with sprigs and boughs of evergreen.

For Stocking Exercise (3). These children wear night dresses and carry lighted candles in one hand and stockings in the other.

From Foreign Lands. Any number and nationality may be represented, each wearing characteristic costume and carrying the flag of his country.

Others may be used for tableaux as desired.

STAGE ARRANGEMENTS AND DECORATIONS

Just back of the center and across the stage, curtains should be arranged for tableaux purposes. This is easily done by stretching a wire across the stage and using sheets for curtains. Above the curtains and near the top of stage a box with a star-shaped opening at the front should be fastened. The opening should be covered with red tissue paper or thin red cloth. A hand lamp or electric bulb within the box produces the light of the star. The box should be partially concealed by light blue draperies across upper portion of stage. Evergreens and other symbols of the Christmastide are used for stage decorations.

Music should be furnished by piano or orchestra.

THE PROLOGUE

(The rear curtains are drawn tightly and the star concealed by evergreens, which may be removed before the pageant begins. Any good Christmas song may be played for a moment after the curtain rises.)

(Enter SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS TIME.)

S. of C. I am the Spirit of Christmas Time,
Whom you feel but seldom see,
But you know that without my presence here
There would no real Christmas be.

I bring you joy of the Holy Night—
The joy of the Christmas morn,
When the Savior came to the lowly earth—
When the dear Christ-Child was born.

I'll take you back to Bethlehem,
To the days of long ago,
When the wise men followed the gleaming star.
To the Babe in the manger low.

Then come with me and we'll glide away
Through the ocean of years so vast—
Away to the scenes of our Savior's birth—
To the shores of the distant past.

She passes slowly off the stage at R., and as she does so the stage is gradually darkened and soft music is played by

CURTAIN.

THE PAGEANT.

The stage is still in darkness except for the light of the star. As the curtain rises a chorus at L. sings, "*It Came Upon the Midnight Clear.*" At close of the song the pianist plays softly.

The children enter at L. with lighted tapers. They march in waving lines across to R., waving tapers as they march. Turn and march back to L. in same way. March again to R., then back to L., and thence around to a line at back of stage.

The children should be numbered consecutively.

Odd numbers advance one step, waving tapers. As they halt, the even numbers advance two steps and halt. Alternate in this way until front of stage is reached. All wave tapers while advancing.

Odd numbers turn to R. and march around in small spiral. Even numbers turn to L. and form small spiral. Both groups reverse and unwind the spirals. All march back to positions at front. All form into single line; turn to R.; circle around and group in form of a five-pointed star.

Those near the front of stage may kneel, while those at rear remain standing. Hold tapers erect.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS (*steps to side and recites*).

The Christmas star is shining
Upon Judea's hill;
The shepherd folks are sleeping
And all around is still.

The Christmas star is shining
So fair and clear and bright,
And all who seek the Christ-Child,
It guideth them aright.

The Christmas star is shining—
A beacon in the skies—
Above the lowly manger
Where the infant Savior lies.

The Christmas star is shining—
A symbol of good cheer,
For all the world rejoices
When Christmas time draws near.

They reverse and unwind the star, marching off stage at R.

(Enter WISE MEN L., with gifts.)

WISE MEN. We are the Wise Men from the East;
We have come from lands afar;
We seek the place of our Savior's birth;
We have followed the gleaming star.

We have brought with us the choicest gifts
That are rich and rare and sweet;
We must find the Virgin and her Child
To lay them at Their feet.

Our journey now must be at an end
For the star shines overhead.
See! Yonder is the crowded inn,
And here's His stable bed.

Soft music by piano as the rear curtains are drawn aside, revealing a manger with a pile of straw upon which is seated the mother and Child. The men advance and lay the gifts at their feet. A tableaux may be presented with the Wise Men bending over the Child. The pageant may proceed without the tableaux if stage facilities are not adequate. The curtains are closed again and the lights turned on.

(*Enter CHILDREN carrying a Picture of "Madonna and the Child."*)

CHILDREN. We bring the picture of the Child
Who was in the manger born,
For whom the angels sang sweet songs,
And the joy-bells rang at morn.

They pass to center of stage as other CHILDREN enter ringing tiny bells. They march in circle about the picture singing the following carol:

Glad Christmas bells, your music tells
The sweet and pleasing story;
How came to earth, in lowly birth,
The Lord of life and glory.

No palace hall its ceiling tall,
His kingly head spread over,
There only stood a stable rude
The heavenly Babe to cover.

Nor rament gay, as there He lay,
Adorned the Infant Stranger,
Poor, humble Child of mother mild,
She laid him in a manger.

But from afar, a splendid star,
The wise men westward turning,
The livelong night saw pure and bright,
Above His birthplace burning.

(*All march off at R.*)

(*Enter CHILDREN with Christmas trees.*)

Any fancy march may be given, then all form in line across stage and recite:

We bring the merry Christmas tree—
The tree that brings good cheer,
And gifts of love we place thereon
For all our friends so dear.

The march is continued. All form in circle or semi-circle at center of stage. One holds tree high; others kneel and sit in form of pyramid with trees held so as to give the suggestion of one large tree. All sing: "*Hurrah for the Christmas Tree.*" The song completed, all rise and march from the stage at R.

The stage is partially darkened, and if desired the rear curtains may be drawn aside, revealing a fireplace.

Enter CHILDREN in night dresses, carrying candles and stockings. They recite as follows:

We bring our stockings here, you see,
To hang at the mantel shelf,
For Santa Claus will soon be here—
The Jolly old, merry old elf.

He comes with reindeer and a sleigh,
And bells that jingle jing,
And in his pack upon his back
The nicest things he'll bring.

Then down the chimney he will come.
Our stockings all to fill,
While we are sleeping snug in bed
And all around is still.

All march in circle around the stage, place candles on mantel shelf and pin stockings to shelf. Continue the circle around to front. Curtsey to audience; circle back to rear and take candles; continue circle around to front and off stage at R.

A lullaby may be sung or played if desired.

RECITATION OR SONG.

"The Night Before Christmas."

Sleighbells are heard off stage.

Enter SANTA CLAUS with pack of toys. He enters from fireplace, if such is provided, otherwise at L.

SANTA: I am Santa Claus, as you may guess,
With my wonderful pack of toys;
With trinkets and dolls for little girls
And drums for little boys.

I visit the children of many lands,
The children of many a clime;
To bring them good cheer and to keep alive
The spirit of Christmas time.

He takes dolls or toys from pack and places one in each stocking. Meanwhile pianist plays lively tune or a good Santa Claus song may be sung off stage. He then passes off at R.

(Enter CHRISTMAS BROWNIES, or FAIRIES, L., with wreaths, boughs, or festoons of holly. They recite):

The Christmas Brownies are we, you see
The Christmas Brownies so jolly,
We help old Santa to bring good cheer,
And now we bring the holly.

All sing, "Deck the Hall With Boughs of Holly." They dance about in circle from L. to R. while singing first stanza. Reverse and dance from R. to L. during second stanza. Form in line across rear after second stanza and trip gaily to front while singing third stanza. Part of the boughs, wreaths, or festoons may be draped upon the wall as they march from stage.

(Enter Children from other lands, each carrying native flag.)

All recite:

We come from many different lands—
From lands across the sea;
We too rejoice at Christmas time
When hearts should merry be.

We're glad because in old Judea
The blessed Child was born ;
We're glad of the gleaming Christmas star
And the bells that rang at morn.

And every year at Christmas time,
Beneath our flags so gay,
We sing the songs of Christmas time,
Of the joys of Christmas day.

Each may sing a stanza of some native Christmas song, if desired. It might be well to have Uncle Sam come upon stage with U. S. flag. In such event the foreigners should group about him and all join in singing some well-known Christmas or patriotic song.

CURTAIN.

TABLEAU

It might be advisable also to recall part of the people of the pageant and group for a closing tableau. The SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS should have conspicuous position.

TABLEAUX

Christmas Tableaux

A GIFT FOR SANTA CLAUS

An empty Christmas tree stands near the center of the stage. Two little girls in night dresses are discovered placing a gift upon the tree for Santa Claus. One girl holds a candle while the other is in the act of tying the gift—a pair of mittens—upon the tree. Both are looking cautiously to one side of stage.

CHRISTMAS MORNING

Two little boys and girls, just out of bed, one busily examining gifts which they are removing from stockings. One has just taken a jumping jack from stocking and is in the act of working it. The other has an airgun (or doll). If an airgun it should be held with hand at trigger as if ready to test it. If a doll, it should be held very affectionately. Both wear very pleased expressions.

A CHRISTMAS PARTNERSHIP

At the center of the stage stand Santa Claus and a Red Cross maid. Between them and a little to the front is a large bag “filled” with gifts. On the front of the bag is the Red Cross sign. Santa is in the act of presenting a pair of mittens or shoes to a ragged boy who stands a little to right and front of him. The Red Cross maid is presenting a dress to a poor ragged girl who stands to left and front of her. Both children have careworn expressions which appear to brighten up somewhat at the reception of the gifts.

DIALOGUES AND PLAYS

Christmas As You Like It

CHARACTERS

MR. ROBERT FISHER

DANIEL TUBBS, *the caretaker*KEZIAH TUBBS, *the housekeeper*

MRS. HARRIET CROSBY } FISHER'S aunts

MRS. EMMA DOWLING }

SCENE: The living room in the Fisher home.

(MRS. TUBBS *comes in with a wreath of green which she hangs up*; MR. TUBBS *comes in with the morning paper*.)

MRS. TUBBS. What's that you've got?

MR. TUBBS. What's the matter with your eyes? Can't you tell the morning paper when you see it, plain as life an' twice as big?

MRS. TUBBS. How'd I know but 'twas yesterday's paper?

(He puts paper on the table.)

MR. TUBBS. Ain't Mr. Robert said nothin' yet 'bout com'ny for Chris'mus? A gloomy time we'll be havin' without nobody to liven us up.

MRS. TUBBS. Not a word. He acts like he don't care a straw whether Chris'mus comes or goes. I've been sort of hintin' for him to have some of his relations come. I'd like some comp'ny. Anyhow, one never knows what to expect from these bach'lers. He should ought to git married.

MR. TUBBS. He knows when he's well off, does Mr. Robert.

MRS. TUBBS. Oh, that's so, is it? *(Angrily, hands on hips.)* I s'pose you think a man shouldn't to git married? I s'pose you're sorry you married me.MR. TUBBS *(darkly)*. Gittin' married sometimes goes ill with a man.

MRS. TUBBS (*with determination*). I'll go home an' spend Chris'mus with my old folks an'—

MR. TUBBS (*anxiously*). You'll do no such thing. I wasn't hittin' 'gainst you—I was—thinkin' of my—cousin Tobias, who married bad.

MRS. TUBBS. It's well you didn't mean me.

(*Enter ROBERT FISHER.*)

FISHER. Well, well, I suppose you are discussing what to get each other for Christmas. Great custom, this giving of presents, isn't it? By the way, Daniel, I want you to get the house warmed up well; we're going to have company for Christmas.

MRS. TUBBS. That's fine, sir. It will make you more merry like. We'll want a big turkey, I'm thinking.

MR. TUBBS. A roast goose would be better.

MRS. TUBBS. What does a man like you know 'bout it? A turkey's what we want, ain't it, Mr. Robert?

MR. TUBBS. A fine roast goose, sir, don't you say so?

FISHER. It will have to be a turkey, Daniel. It is my aunt Emma who is coming and she insists on turkey.

MRS. TUBBS. That's splendid. I s'pose we'll be havin' a real Chris'mus.

FISHER. Yes. (*Disconsolately.*) Yes, we'll have to go the limit, I imagine because Aunt Emma is a great hand to celebrate Christmas. She'll probably want a tree, trimmed up and decked with presents. (*Sighs.*)

MRS. TUBBS. Now wouldn't that be splendid?

FISHER. Oh, perhaps so, but—well, sort of a bother, I think. Anyway, I must do all I can to please Aunt Emma. She hasn't been to see me for several years and I want to keep on the good side of her.

MR. TUBBS. We'll help you all we can, Mr. Robert. I used to be a real good hand at trimmin' up a Chris'mus tree.

MRS. TUBBS. Humph, Dan Tubbs, a nice lookin' tree you'd make without *me* to tell you how to fix it. Many a fine tree *I've* trimmed up, sir.

FISHER. Well, between us I imagine we'll manage fine. We must spare no pains to please Aunt Emma. (*Goes off.*)

MRS. TUBBS (*mournfully*.) This means an awful lot of work.

MR. TUBBS. That's the way! Begin to complain! I thought you wanted to have comp'ny, now here you go.

MRS. TUBBS. Who's goin' anywheres? Well, I guess I can stand the work seein' she's a fine woman.

MR. TUBBS. How'd you know she's fine?

MRS. TUBBS. 'Cause she likes turkey fer Chris'mus.

MR. TUBBS. Kezier Tubbs, any woman that don't prefer roast goose has got somethin' the matter with 'er taste.

(*Enter ROBERT FISHER, carrying an open letter.*)

FISHER (*sinking into a chair*). Heaven help me—nothing else can!

MRS. TUBBS. What is it, Mr. Robert—somebody dead?

MR. TUBBS. Don't you worry—I'll help you—yes, sir, to the very limit.

FISHER. *Here* is a letter from my Aunt Harriet saying she is coming to spend Christmas with me.

MR. TUBBS. Well, ain't two better'n one? The more the merrier an' a merry Chris'mus is what we want.

FISHER. But you don't understand. My Aunt Harriet and my Aunt Emma don't get on at all—what one likes, the other doesn't. Aunt Harriet doesn't approve of Christmas trees, and presents, not in the least, and she writes that she hopes I'll have roast goose for Christmas dinner.

MR. TUBBS (*pleased*). Roast goose! She is a fine lady, I'm sure.

MRS. TUBBS (*decidedly*). We must have turkey—your Aunt Emma spoke first, Mr. Robert.

FISHER. Oh, *why* did they decide to come at the same time? I've *got* to keep on the good side of Aunt Harriet—she is worth more than Aunt Emma is. Whatever shall I do? This is apt to be anything but a merry Christmas for me. My two aunts will get to quarreling and then they'll both lay the blame on me. (*Groans.*)

MRS. TUBBS. My, my won't that be dreadful?

MR. TUBBS. It do beat all how much trouble the women makes us men, Mr. Robert.

MRS. TUBBS (*belligerently*). Oh, is that—SO? Let me tell you—

MR. TUBBS (*quickly*). Some women, I mean, of course and—

FISHER (*interrupting*). Now I wonder *how* I can manage. We can have a turkey and a goose both, that will settle *that*; but if we don't have a Christmas tree Aunt Emma will be hurt and if we do have one, Aunt Harriet will be insulted. Tell me what to do.

MR. TUBBS. Now, let me think. I—

MRS. TUBBS (*giving him a withering glance*). Now let *me* think. I'm sure I can—

FISHER (*springing up*). I have it! We'll pretend that we are having a Christmas tree here for your daughter, Mrs. Tubbs, and—

MRS. TUBBS. But my daughter is married, sir, these three years.

FISHER. Oh, yes, of course; well, we'll have a tree for your granddaughter—a sad little girl who has no relations—

MRS. TUBBS. But if she is my granddaughter, sir, she'll have some relations I'm thinking.

FISHER. Sure, sure! Well, we'll say her mother is sick, and we have to cheer her up by having a Christmas tree. Aunt Emma will enjoy helping with that; but since it is for you, instead of my tree, Aunt Harriet will not need to see it, and she will not be offended.

MR. TUBBS. But see here; our granddaughter is only a year old and she's a boy—thank heaven, not a girl a-tall.

FISHER. Well, (*Thinks*) we—we—why, of course, we can borrow a little girl—one about six years old, who will enjoy the tree. There are plenty of children to borrow, I'm sure.

MRS. TUBBS (*eagerly*). Yes, I can borrow Mrs. Clandy's little Mary. I think your plan will work all right, Mr. Robert.

FISHER. We'll have the affair in the room back of the library and it won't annoy Aunt Harriet. Yes, I think we shall manage to give each of my aunts the Christmas she likes.

MRS. TUBBS. I'm glad we're to have a fine roast turkey.

MR. TUBBS. An' how we'll enjoy that grand roast goose.

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE: Same as Act I. FISHER comes in, paces nervously about, sits, gets up quickly, goes over and sits in another chair.

FISHER. I hope this affair goes off all right. I think we can manage Aunt Emma easily, but I'm not so sure about Aunt Harriet—she's sort of a—a whirlwind, at times; stirs things up when they don't suit her.

(Enter MRS. TUBBS.)

MRS. TUBBS. I think it's best if I take down this wreath, Mr. Robert. It might make your Aunt Harriet cross to see a Chris'mus wreath.

FISHER. Yes, take it down; hang it in the—in Aunt Emma's bedroom; that will please her. Everything is coming all right isn't it?

MRS. TUBBS. I'll say so, sir. We've got lots of good things to eat, with the turkey an' goose ordered, an' little Mary is tickled to *death*—though it's a lively corpse she is, 'bout the Chris'mus tree. I'll say things are comin' fine. (*Goes off with wreath.*)

(Enter MR. TUBBS.)

MR. TUBBS. The Chris'mus tree has come—a fine an' grand one. Shall I start to set it up already?

FISHER. Not until evening, then I can help. I have to meet Aunt Emma's train before long. She gets in before Aunt Harriet does but they'll both be here this afternoon.

MR. TUBBS. An' 'tis your Aunt Emma comes first? I'll not forget.

FISHER (*anxiously*). Now be sure not to talk about Christmas festivities before Aunt Harriet.

MR. TUBBS. Sure an' I'll remember. Dan Tubbs'll help you an' we'll please 'em both.

FISHER. I'm going now. I want to stop at the store before I go to the station. (*Goes off.*)

MR. TUBBS. Guess I'll rest a bit. (*Sits in easy chair.*) Aunt Emma may be all right but it's the other one has the

good sense—she likes roast goose (*Smacks lips*) an' she don't take stock in all this givin'. Now there's Kezier, my wife, naggin' me half the time 'bout gittin' this an' that she wants fer Chris'mas presents. No sense in it. I'll say, spendin' money so. (*Yawns, shuts eyes, nods head.*)

(*Enter AUNT HARRIET, with brisk step.*)

AUNT HARRIET (*angrily*). I'd like to know the meaning of this. (*Slams down traveling bag.*) I'd like to know why I wasn't met. (MR. TUBBS *jumps up*.) I'd like to know where that nephew of mine is—the impudent rascal, neglecting me this way. (*Takes off hat and coat and throws on chair.*)

MR. TUBBS (*bowing awkwardly*). I beg your pardon, Ma'am, but you come too soon—I mean Mr. Robert thought you didn't come—I mean, your train didn't come fer more'n a hour yet. He's gone to meet you now.

AUNT HARRIET. Just like him; probably read my figures wrong though I'm sure I wrote them plainly. (*Sits.*) Well, I can rest while I'm waiting for him to come back. I find it hard traveling now when every one is hurrying to get some place for Christmas.

MR. TUBBS. Yes, ma'am, but it's a nice time, Chris'mus is. My wife an' me, now, we're plannin' somethin' fine. (*Aside.*) I'll tell his Aunt Emma 'bout it, an' git 'er int'-rested in the idee. (*To AUNT H.*) You see, our little gran'darter—poor little gal, she's only six, an' 'count of sickness, she havin' to stay here fer Chris'mus an' we're goin' to have a tree fer the poor little gal. She's awful tickled.

AUNT HARRIET. It will be nice for her.

MR. TUBBS. We want to have it real nice, so's to please the poor little gal, an' we're goin' to trim the tree up han'-some as we can.

AUNT HARRIET. She ought to enjoy it. (*Reminiscently.*) I remember how Christmas trees used to thrill me when I was little. The prettiest one we had was decorated with strings of popcorn and red canberries and had a star in the tip.

(Enter MRS. TUBBS.)

MR. TUBBS. This is Mr. Robert's aunt. Her train got in sooner than he thought. I was tellin' her 'bout the tree fer the poor little gal.

MRS. TUBBS (*bowing*). I'm glad you've come, Ma'am. I hope you'll tell us how to trim up the tree, if you'll be so kind.

AUNT HARRIET (*unbending*). I declare I believe I *would* like to trim a Christmas tree—it is so many years since I did. I think I can make that little girl open her eyes. I'd like to pick out some presents for her too. I'll have Robert take me down town. (*To MRS. T.*) You may show me to my room; I'll get fixed up a bit so I can go to the stores.

(MRS. T. *takes the bag and they go off.*)

MR. TUBBS (*happily*). It's goin' to work fine. Aunt Emma will have a good time helpin' us; now if his Aunt Harriet can be kept 'way from it, we'll have Chris'mus as each one likes it.

(Enter FISHER and AUNT EMMA.)

FISHER. It is sure good to have you here, Aunt Emma. We are going to enjoy your visit, and we'll have a merry time if you'll help us with that Christmas tree. (*He sets down her bag; she takes off coat and hat.*) This is Tubbs—you remember him. (TUBBS *bows, she greets him.*) I hope you and Aunt Harriet will get along all right.

AUNT EMMA. Oh, I can stand her if she keeps to herself and doesn't try to spoil our Christmas tree for the poor little girl. I wouldn't mind Harriet if she didn't have such wrong notions about Christmas. I'll go to my room and primp up a bit. I know the way—Tubbs can carry my bag. (*They go off.*)

FISHER (*looking at AUNT HARRIET'S hat and coat*). My heavens, what is this? Has—Aunt Harriet arrived? She will eat me alive.

(Enter TUBBS, *acting frightened.*)

MR. TUBBS. Is—did—did you—call this one—Aunt Emma?

FISHER. Certainly. (*Tragically.*) Whose coat is this?

MR. TUBBS (*frightened*). An'—an'—was it Aunt Harriet I told 'bout the Chris'mus tree?

FISHER (*grabbing him*). You DID? I've a notion to brain you. You—

TUBBS. Wait a minute! She likes it—she wants to help—honest!

(*Enter AUNT HARRIET.*)

FISHER (*hurrying to her, getting on knees and raising clasped hands*). Dear aunt, please forgive me for missing your train, please!

AUNT HARRIET (*laughing*). Get up, foolish nephew. It wouldn't be you if you didn't make some blunder. The housekeeper is going to give me a bit of tea then I want you to take me to town to buy trimming and presents for the poor little girl's tree. I can trim it better than Emma can.

FISHER. Fine! I'm glad you'll help us.

(*Enter AUNT EMMA.*)

AUNT HARRIET. Emma, do you want to go with us? What a good time we'll have making the poor little girl happy. We'll have a real *Merry Christmas*. (*She beams on them; they look surprised.*)

CURTAIN

Molly's Christmas Tree

CHARACTERS

MOLLY, *who made the plans*

MRS. BROWN, *her mother*

ANNA

MINNIE

} *her playmates*

PIETRO

JACQUES

TOMMY

STANISLAUS

ROSA

JOAN

} *her Christmas guests*

SCENE I: *A living room. MRS. B. discovered knitting or reading.*

(*Enter MOLLY.*)

MOLLY. Oh mother, guess what I would like for Christmas. You'd never guess it in the wide, wide world.

MRS. B. Mercy sakes, child! Better ask what you don't want. If Santa Claus should bring everything you've asked for he would have very little left for anyone else.

MOLLY. But this is different, mother.

MRS. B. Very likely. I presume you want a flying machine or a diamond ring or—

MOLLY. Oh, no, I don't, I want something better than those. I want—

MRS. B. Something better than those? I shall certainly have to give it up.

MOLLY. Then I'll have to tell you. I want a great big Christmas tree—as big as—

MRS. B. A Christmas tree? Why, don't you always have one—as big as your father can find?

MOLLY. Yes, but I want this one to be bigger yet and then I want—but will you promise what I ask, mother?

MRS. B. Mercy! How could I promise without knowing what it is? It might be altogether unreasonable.

MOLLY. Oh, it isn't unreasonable at all. You see I don't want Santa Claus to bring me much of anything for myself this year.

MRS. B. Not bring you much of anything. You certainly are a funny child. What can you want of a big Christmas tree without presents to put on it?

MOLLY. That's where the secret is, you see. I want to go out into the "highways and byways," as the Bible says, and invite all the poor children who don't have any nice Christmas presents to come here, and then I'll send a letter to Santa and ask him to fill the tree brimful of nice, useful presents for them all.

MRS. B. Well, of all things! Where did you get that idea into your head?

MOLLY. Well, you see there's so much want and suffering in the world that I just thought I'd like to give up my Christmas gifts this year for the sake of those who don't have any. May I, mother?

MRS. B. Mercy me, child! Would you really wish to give up your own gifts for the sake of others?

MOLLY. Yes, mother, indeed I would.

MRS. B. Well, then, we'll see what your father says. If he's willing, I have no objection. It's certainly a noble idea. (*Exit.*)

MOLLY (*clapping hands*). Goody! Then it's all right because papa always does what I ask him. Now I'll have the splendidest Christmas! (*Dances up and down.*)

(*Enter MINNIE and ANNA.*)

MINNIE. Why, Molly, what's the matter? Are you crazy?

MOLLY. No, but I'm going to have just the loveliest Christmas.

ANNA. Tell us about it, Molly. Do!

MOLLY. Well, you see, I'm going to write to Santa Claus and tell him not to bring me any presents this year—

GIRLS. Not to bring you any presents.

MINNIE. I shouldn't call that a very lovely Christmas.

ANNA. Neither would I.

MOLLY. But I'm going to ask him to bring a whole lot for some poor children that I'm going to invite and then I'll ask papa to buy the biggest Christmas tree he can find and—

ANNA. Where are you going to find the poor children?

MOLLY. Oh I'm going out into the "*bywoods and hedges*," as the Bible says, and look for them, and I want you girls to go with me.

GIRLS. Won't that be fun!

ANNA. Let's go now.

MOLLY. All right! Then we'll ask papa about the tree and then write to old Santa Claus. (*Exeunt.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.

Same as before. A large Christmas tree filled with gifts—mittens, toys, dolls, bundles, etc.

MOLLY, MINNIE and ANNA are discovered fixing and admiring tree.

MOLLY. I'll bet they'll be tickled!

MINNIE. Old Santa certainly did well.

ANNA. And here they come now!

MOLLY. Come right in. The tree's all ready.

(Enter guests.)

CHILDREN. O-O-h, look at the pretty tree!

PIETRO. Oh, looka, Rosa! De nica presents!

ROSA. Yas. Santa de nica man, he is.

JOAN (*clapping hands*). Ah ze splendid presents—

JACQUES. An ze beautiful flag of France.

STAN. And such nice presents for little Stanislaus.

TOMMY. And for Tommy Atkins, that's me.

MOLLY. Well, if you'll sit down we'll see what Santa has brought for each of you.

MOLLY. Here are some dolls for the girls. Look! Isn't this a funny one? (*Holds up Italian doll.*)

ROSA. Thata mine. I would know Italiano doll anywhere.

JOAN. And ze lovely French dollie! It makes me so happy yet.

ANNA. Here's a pair of mittens and a cap for Tommy.

MINNIE. And here are the same things for Jacques and Stanislaus.

MOLLY. And for Pietro, too. (*They hand presents to boys who proceed to put them on.*)

TOMMY. Gee, but aren't these dandy presents! And brand new ones, too.

STAN. You bet! Dey keep de cold from my ears.

JACQUES. And zey make my hands for be warm all ze time.

PIETRO. She da good Americana girl. She maka da nice-a Christmas for us.

MOLLY. But don't you know it was Santa Claus brought them. You must thank him.

PIETRO. You maka da tree, Santa maka da presents.

(*Boys march around with caps and mittens on.*)

MINNIE. I say, don't they look funny? Here's Poland and France and Italy and—

ANNA. Yes, but they are all real Americans now. They've been Americanized, you know. As Auntie would say, "They're in the melting pot."

TOMMY. Gee! We don't want to get in no melting pot.

JACQUES. No! No! Ze melting pot too hot.

MOLLY. I think this has been a perfectly lovely Christmas.

GIRLS. So do I—and I!

GUESTS. And so do we!

ALL. Then hurrah for Santa Claus and Molly!

MINNIE. Now let's all sing something.

(*All sing any good Christmas song.*)

CURTAIN.

The Santa Claus Brigade

CHARACTERS

ROBERT

HAROLD

ALBERT

PERCY

ANNA

MINNIE

JULIA

GRACE

COSTUMES: *Ordinary school clothing in Scene I. In Scene II, boys wear Santa Claus costumes. Girls wear red toboggans or fur-trimmed caps, thick skirts trimmed with red, or with fur. Red sweaters might be worn.*

SCENE I.

ANNA. Come, let's try our song once more.

SEVERAL. All right, we're ready. "Sail on! Sail on!"

(*All join in singing any Christmas song.*)

MINNIE. There now, I think that will do first rate. Don't you people think so?

SEVERAL. Yes! Yes!

ALBERT. Well, what's the next thing on the program?

JULIA. Shopping, Christmas shopping, of course, and plenty of it.

ROBERT. Shopping? Say, that's all you girls have done for the past three weeks—is just shopping.

GRACE. Well, I guess you'd have to do it, too, if you had as many to buy presents for as I have.

ANNA. Or me, either. There's mamma and papa and grandpa and Uncle Jim and—

MINNIE. And all our cousins whom we reckon by the dozens and—

ALBERT. And your uncles and your aunts.

JULIA. And of course, when people buy presents for us we just have to buy them presents in return.

PERCY. Of course.

JULIA. So that's why we have so much shopping to do, you see.

HAROLD. But I thought it was Santa Claus that brought the presents.

ANNA. So he does—that is—he brings most of them, but you see he has so much to do that we like to help him all we can.

ALBERT. My grandma says he must have to work harder than he did when she was a girl, because there's so many more people in the world nowadays.

ROBERT. Maybe that's the reason he skips so many—my uncle says he knows of lots of boys and girls that he's never given any presents to yet.

GRACE. Well, I know of one, and that's Molly Way. She didn't even get a stick of candy last year.

MINNIE. I know of another one, and that's Jennie Green.

HAROLD. And I know another one—little Tommy Burke didn't get anything, either.

ALBERT. I guess there's a lot of folks that Santa Claus doesn't know about, when you come to think about it.

PERCY. Like enough we ought to send word to him.

ROBERT. Or else we might act as Santa Claus ourselves—that is, sort of assistants, you know.

MINNIE. Oh, yes; let's do it. That will be lovely.

ALBERT. Just what I say, too. It'll be a barrel of fun.

GRACE. And we can take part of the money we were going shopping with to buy the presents.

ANNA. But we'll have to go shopping after all.

PERCY. Sure enough, we'll all go shopping together.

JULIA. What? Will you boys go shopping?

PERCY. Why, of course. How can we buy presents if we don't.

HAROLD. And let's go right away, too. I've got 75 cents in my pocket that I want to spend before it wears a hole through.

ROBERT. And I've got a dollar bill.

ALBERT. Well, come on! Let's hurry, and buy the things before they are gone.

PERCY. And tonight we'll rig ourselves up like regular Santa Clauses. Gee! but won't we have the jolliest fun!

ANNA. And we'll be Lady Santa Clauses.

MINNIE. Well, now wouldn't that surprise you. Here the boys were making fun of us girls' shopping a few minutes ago and now they're just as crazy to go as we are.

ALBERT. Well, come along. Here's a merry Christmas for everybody. (*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

(*Enter boys and girls dressed in Santa Claus costume.*)

ROBERT. Well, here we are, all ready for business.

ANNA. Don't we look like regular Santa Clauses though?

ALBERT. We're a regular Santa Claus brigade.

HAROLD. I say, let's call ourselves "The Santa Claus Brigade."

PERCY. That's what I say, too.

MINNIE. But "brigade" refers to war, doesn't it? Don't you know that Christmas is a day of peace and not of war?

JULIA. It means "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

ROBERT. Yes, we know that, but ours will be a peace brigade, and we'll do all we can to drive out the enemies of the poor and the needy.

HAROLD. That ton of coal I got pa to buy for old Mrs. Hughes will help drive out the cold for a spell.

MINNIE. So will these warm mittens and cap that I'm going to give Jennie Green.

ALBERT. And this big basket of goodies will help to drive away "hunger" from the Smith's home.

ANNA. So will that bushel of potatoes and the turkey my Uncle Jim sent to the Briggses.

ROBERT. Well, I guess all these dolls and drums and picture books will help to drive away sorrow and sadness.

PERCY. And make it a day of gladness for some people.

JULIA. And these pictures that we are to give them will remind them of the One whose birthday we celebrate.

GRACE. Yes, of Him who brought peace and love and good will to all the earth.

MINNIE. I think after all that "The Santa Claus Brigade" will be a good name for us. We'll surely drive away all sadness for a while anyway.

ROBERT. Well, all get ready then. Forward, march!

(ROBERT assumes the manners of a captain. Others shoulder toy guns, hold flags, blow toy horns, beat toy drums, ring tiny bells, etc., as they march about the stage. All form in line and sing any good Santa Claus song or Christmas carol.)

CURTAIN.

Surprising Santa

CHARACTERS

HATTIE

HENRY

SUSIE

FAIRIES

JOHNNY

SANTA CLAUS

ELVES

SCENE: *A living room. A tree stands at rear of room.*

(*Enter GIRLS left, BOYS right.*)

JOHNNY. Just see the nice surprise we've got for Santa Claus! (*Holds up mittens.*)

HENRY (*holding cap*). Wouldn't mind if I had a cap like this myself. Wouldn't be any chance of freezing my ears. (*Puts cap on head.*)

HATTIE. Well, we've a surprise for Mrs. Santa, too.

SUSIE (*holding hood*). See! a lovely hood. (*Tries it on.*)

JOHNNY. I bet she'll be glad of it, living way up there by the North Pole.

HATTIE. My, you do make me think of Mrs. Santa.

HENRY. And do I make you think of Mr. Santa Claus?

HATTIE. 'No, because you haven't got any long white whiskers.

SUSIE. I say, let's put the things on the tree. It's getting late.

HATTIE. Then we'll have to go to bed, because Santa might come around early, you know.

JOHNNY. Let's hang them on this limb up here, where he'll be sure to see 'em.

SUSIE. Don't hang 'em too high, or he won't see 'em at all.

HENRY. And here's a note we're going to pin on our presents.

HATTIE. Read it to us; do!

HENRY. Probably you'll think it's silly. It's what Johnny and I made up. (*Reads.*)

"A merry Christmas greeting
To dear old Santa Claus,
This nice, warm cap we give to you,
And these mittens, too, because
You bring to us such splendid gifts
Of candy, nuts and toys;
So please accept these simple gifts
From two little thankful boys."

SUSIE. My! I wish we could write as good a one as that to put on our presents. All we're written is "A Merry Christmas to Mrs. Santa Claus."

HATTIE. Well, now, we've got 'em all on the tree; I say let's hide behind these draperies and watch for him.

SUSIE. And then we'll see if he really looks like his pictures.

HENRY. That's what I say, too.

JOHNNY. Yes, I think that will be real fun. Let's do it.

HATTIE. But we must keep awful still and never make a peep.

SUSIE. And we must be very careful not to fall asleep.

JOHNNY. If we should, I guess Santa would be surprised.

HATTIE. And then maybe he wouldn't leave any presents at all.

(All crouch behind draperies and try to keep very still.)

HENRY. My! This is going to be lots of fun!

SUSIE. Sh! S'pose that's his sleighbells jingling now?

HATTIE. I don't know but we'd better keep still.

(All keep very still, finally begin to nod, and at last drop off to sleep. The pianist plays softly. Enter DREAM FAIRIES. They trip along lightly about the stage, finally stopping near children.)

We are the Fairies who bring sweet dreams,
We are the Fairies gay;
We bring to the children lovely dreams
Of Santa, who comes this way;
We bring them dreams of toys and dolls,
Of sleds and pretty drums,
Of picture books and choo-choo cars,
And nuts and sugar plums.

(They dance lightly about and return.)

A pleasant task it is for us
To scatter dreams so sweet;
We scatter them in the grandest homes,
And cottages so neat;
The rich and poor we serve alike,
All sorts of children, too;
We wish that all these pleasant dreams
Might every one come true.

(FAIRIES dance lightly about stage and exeunt. Bells are heard off stage. Enter SANTA CLAUS and ELVES.)

SANTA. Well, my merry elves, here's another Christmas tree for us to fill.

ELVES. And a big one it is at that.

SANTA. 'Tis a merry lot of youngsters lives here, if I'm not mistaken; so we must do the best we can by 'em.

ELVES. That's what you say everywhere.

SANTA. Yes, so I do; but these are especially good children. *(Looking in book.)* Let me see—their names are

Johnny and Henry and Susie and Hattie Brown—two boys and two girls—so put on plenty of drums and dolls and skates and candy and such things. (*Sees package.*) Hello! what's all this? (*Reads note.*) Well, bless my stars! Just listen to this: (*Reads.*)

“A merry Christmas greeting
To dear old Santa Claus.
This nice warm cap we give to you,
And mittens, too, because
You bring to us such splendid gifts
Of candy, nuts and toys.
So please accept these simple gifts
From two little thankful boys.”

Well, well, didn't I tell you they were good children? And here's another one: (*Reads.*)

“A Merry Christmas to Mrs. Santa Claus from Susie and Hattie Brown.” Well, now, won't the old lady be tickled over that! Just what she needs, too. Better put on an extra doll or two and some more toys.

ELVES. We're putting 'em on fast as ever we can.

SANTA (*discovering children*). Well, I declare! Ho! ho! ho! Just cast your eyes this way. Here's a sight, and no mistake. Here are the little shavers themselves, fast asleep. Reckon they thought they'd take a peep at old Santa, but the Dream Fairies got here first and took 'em off to the Land of Nod. Well, I reckon we'd better be going before they wake up. Got everything on the tree?

ELVES. Yes, yes; there's nothing left.

SANTA. Then we'll be off and away.

(*Exeunt. Sound of “Get up, Dancer! Get up Prancer!” etc. Children awaken, rub eyes and look about.*)

JOHNNY. What was it? I heard a noise.

HENRY. So did I. I'll bet 'twas Santa.

SUSIE. I'm sure I heard his voice.

HATTIE. And, oh! look! It was he, for see!—he's filled the tree with presents! Aren't they lovely?

SUSIE. And we didn't see him, after all.

JOHNNY. I wonder if he found his own presents.

HATTIE. And Mrs. Santa's presents.

HENRY. Yes; they're all gone, and here's a note. (*Takes note and reads.*)

"Dear Little Folks: Thank ye ever so much for the splendid presents. Hope you'll enjoy yours as well. With best wishes for a Merry Christmas, from

MR. AND MRS. SANTA CLAUS."

HATTIE. Let's go and tell mamma.

SUSIE. Wait; I want to get that doll. I know it's for me.

JOHNNY. And here's a drum for me.

HENRY. And an air gun for me.

HATTIE. Come on! Let's go and show mother.

HENRY. All right. Forward, march!

(*All march off stage, JOHNNY ahead with drum, HENRY with gun, SUSIE and HATTIE each with doll.*)

CURTAIN

A Reception for Santa Claus

CHARACTERS

MOTHER GOOSE	OLD-WOMAN-OF-SHOE
MOTHER HUBBARD	MR. AND MRS. JACK SPRATT
BO-PEEP	KING COLE AND FIDDLERS THREE
SANTA CLAUS	PETER PUMPKIN EATER
TOMMY TUCKER	ANY NUMBER OF CHILDREN, ETC.

COSTUMES: Familiar costumes of Santa Claus and Mother Goose people.

SCENE I. *A plainly furnished room. MOTHER GOOSE is discovered straightening the room.*

MOTHER GOOSE. Dear me! I wonder what's become of that little Boy Blue. If 'twas summer time I'd think he was under the haystack fast asleep. He's the biggest sleepy head

I ever did see. (*Sounds of horn outside.*) Ah, there he comes now.

(*Enter BOY BLUE.*)

Come, Boy Blue, I want you to go and blow your horn as loud as ever you can.

BOY BLUE. What for, Mother Goose? The cows are not in the corn now.

MOTHER GOOSE. No, of course not, but I want you to call all my people together. Tell 'em I'm going to hold a mass meeting right away and want everybody to come. We've got to get up a reception for Mr. Santa Claus.

BOY BLUE. That's so. Just you watch me, Mother Goose. I'll blow it so loud that everybody'll come on a double quick, see if they don't. (*Exit, and is heard blowing horn off stage.*)

MOTHER GOOSE. Well, I do hope he'll have good luck gettin' 'em here, because we want to have a rousin' reception for Mr. Santa soon's he gets back from his yearly trip. Let me see who I'll have on the committee. There's Old Mother Hubbard and Jack Spratt and Bo-Peep and—

(*Enter TOMMY TUCKER.*)

TOMMY. Hello, Mother Goose!

MOTHER GOOSE. Why, here's Tommy Tucker come so quick a-ready. How'd you get here so soon?

TOMMY. Why, you see, I was I was late getting home for supper, and I was hurryin' fast as ever I could when I met Boy Blue with his horn, and he said you wanted me right away.

MOTHER GOOSE. Yes, so I do. I've got something very important to talk about. (*Noise outside.*) Well, well, if here aren't some more people coming already. Boy Blue did start 'em, an' no mistake.

(*Enter MOTHER HUBBARD, TAFFY, PETER, MR. AND MRS. SPRATT, OLD WOMAN-OF-SHOE, etc.*)

TAFFY. Here we are, Mother Goose. What do you want?

PETER. We've hustled as fast as ever we could.

OLD WOMAN. And I had an awful time gettin' my children here so quick. I have to give 'em a good whipping.

MOTHER GOOSE. Well, everybody sit down and listen while I tell ye about it. (*All sit in circle about MOTHER GOOSE.*) You see, it's jest like this,—Mr. Santa Claus is comin' home tomorrow.

CHILDREN. And he promised to bring us some presents!

OLD WOMAN. Shame on ye! Keep still while Mother Goose is talking.

MOTHER GOOSE. And I thought we ought to get up a nice big reception for him.

TAFFY. Why, yes, say we do.

PETER. How'll we receive him?

MOTHER GOOSE. With a Christmas tree for one thing. We'll surprise him at his own game.

JACK S. Anything else? Nothing in the way of eatables?

MOTHER GOOSE. Why, yes, a big dinner, of course.

JACK S. Ah, just the thing! But I won't eat any fat.

MRS. S. And I won't eat any lean.

TAFFY. Ho! ho! Then twixt you both you'll lick the platter clean.

PETER. I'd like to know who's going to do all the cooking.

MOTHER GOOSE. That's jest what I'm goin' to tell ye. I'm goin' to appoint a committee to see to it.

TAFFY. A committee?

MOTHER GOOSE. Yes, an' I'm goin' to have Mother Hubbard, an' the Old-Woman-of-the-Shoe, an' Mrs. Jack Spratt for the committee.

GIRL. Then we won't have nothing but broth if ma does the cooking.

TAFFY. And we won't have nothing at all if Mother Hubbard does it.

MOTHER HUBBARD. I guess I can cook all right when there's anything in my cupboard.

MOTHER GOOSE. Yes, of course she can. I've always known Mother Hubbard was a tip-top good cook.

PETER. And what about that Christmas tree? Who's going to see about it?

MOTHER GOOSE. I'm going to have another committee for that. I'll have Taffy for one.

PETER. Ho! ho! ho!

"Taffy was a Welshman,
Taffy was a thief,
Taffy came to my house
And stole a piece of beef."

TAFFY. Hold on! That ain't no fair.

PETER. But it's true.

"I went to Taffy's house,
Taffy wasn't home,
Then Taffy came to my house,
And stole a marrow bone."

MOTHER GOOSE. Tut! tut! Don't ye be twittin' of what's past an' gone. Don't ye know Taffy's reformed?

PETER. So he has. I'd forgotten.

MOTHER GOOSE. And I'll have Little Bo-Peep for another on the committee, and Peter Pumpkin Eater for the other.

TAFFY (*singing*).

"Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater,
Had a wife and couldn't keep her."

MOTHER GOOSE. Here, now, you stop your twittin', too. It don't matter if he couldn't keep her, does it?

PETER. But I did keep her. I "put her in a pumpkin shell, and there I kept her very well."

BO-PEEP. Dear me! I'm afraid I'll have more trouble with the committee than I do with my sheep.

TAFFY. Never mind, Bo-Peep, you won't have any trouble with me.

PETER. Nor me either. We'll all put in our best licks for Santa's Christmas tree.

CHILDREN. And I wish he'd hurry up and come. So do I, etc.

MOTHER GOOSE. And I hope everybody'll think to bring something real nice to put on the tree for Mr. Santa, and something good for Mother Goose to cook.

ALL. We will! We will! Just wait and see! We'll go and get them right away.

(*Exeunt singing.*)

CURTAIN

SCENE II.

The same as before. A Christmas tree stands near center of room.

MOTHER GOOSE *and others stand about admiring it.*

MOTHER GOOSE. Well, there! If Mr. Santa doesn't say this is the nicest tree he ever set eyes on then I miss my guess.

PETER. It's certainly a fine tree if I do say it as I did the biggest part of it.

TAFFY. I guess you didn't do any more than I did. I furnished all the candles.

PETER. Well, didn't I get the tree? I guess that counts for something.

MOTHER G. Now don't go to bickering. Everybody did their part all right.

MOTHER HUBBARD. And we've got the nicest dinner he ever sat down to, I'll warrant ye.

CHILDREN. I wish he'd come quick. I wish he'd come quick! I bet it'll make his eyes bung out.

BO-BEEP. Well, here he comes now.

MOTHER GOOSE. Everybody get ready to receive him in proper style.

(Enter KING COLE as SANTA CLAUS.)

ALL. Welcome, welcome home, Mr. Santa. See what we've got for you.

KING COLE. Well, well, a Christmas tree, sure enough. The nicest one I ever saw.

FIRST BOY. You never could guess what I put on the tree.

SECOND BOY. Me neither.

BOY BLUE. Mother Goose put a nice pair of warm mit—

MOTHER GOOSE. Sh—! Don't be tellin' everything that's on the tree.

FIRST GIRL. And we've got the nicest dinner! Mother Hubbard baked it.

SECOND GIRL. And our mother made some nice chicken broth, too.

KING COLE. That sounds good. Hadn't we better begin it right away? I haven't eaten in so long I begin to feel as thin as a wafer.

TAFFY. Ho! ho! ho! ho!

MOTHER HUBBARD. You don't look very thin.

KING COLE. Appearances are deceiving. Santa Clausin' is awful hard on the appetite, you know.

BO-PEEP. Seems as if you look taller than common.

KING COLE. That's because I've stretched myself out squeezing down the chimneys.

MRS. SPRATT. And you don't talk the same, either.

KING COLE. I must have caught cold. The drafts from some of them chimneys is something awful.

MISTRESS MARY. And your whiskers look different, too. They're too long. (*She takes hold of them and pulls mask off.*)

ALL. O-o-oh! Why, it's old King Cole! The idea.

KING COLE. Ho! ho! ho! I came pretty near fooling you that time, didn't I?

MOTHER HUBBARD. Shame on ye for playin' sech a trick.

KING COLE. Ho! ho! That only pays ye for not inviting me to the reception.

MOTHER GOOSE. What! Wasn't you invited? (*To BOY BLUE.*) Didn't you invite King Cole to the reception?

BOY BLUE. No'm, he was asleep in his chair and I didn't dast wake him up.

MOTHER GOOSE. Well we'll forgive ye this time, King Cole, providin' you've brought your fiddlers three.

KING COLE. Oh, they're here. (*To BOY BLUE.*) Here, boy, go "bring my pipe and bring my bowl and bring my fiddlers three."

(*BOY BLUE goes off stage and blows horn.*)

(*Enter FIDDLERS, playing.*)

BOY BLUE (*entering*). Who do you think's coming now? Old Santa. He's right here.

ALL. Oh, goody! Mr. Santa's coming. The reception's going to begin.

TAFFY. Yes, it's him this time all right.

(*Enter SANTA.*)

SANTA. Heigho! What's going on here, I'd like to know?

SEVERAL. It's a Christmas tree for you, Mr. Santa. Aren't you glad?

SANTA. A Christmas tree? Well, I should say so! And for me, do you say?

MOTHER GOOSE. Yes, Mr. Santa, this is a reception for you.

SANTA. Whee! A reception for me? Wal, wal, now that's real good of ye, 'tis for a fact. I didn't know I was thought so much of at home. A good many people ain't, you know.

MOTHER GOOSE. Wal, that's not so here. We all think a lot of Mr. Santa, don't we?

SEVERAL. Course we do. He's all right.

KING COLE (*waking from drowse*). Who's all right?

ALL. Santa Claus.

MOTHER GOOSE. Wal, now everybody get ready and we'll see what's on the tree. Taffy, you may take 'em off.

CHILDREN. Oh, yes, let's see what's on the tree!

OLD-WOMAN-OF-SHOE. Hush! Keep still! Don't you know this tree is for Mr. Santa?

BOY. But Old Santa said he'd bring something for us.

SANTA. To be sure I did. You just wait and see.

TAFFY (*taking things from the tree*). Well, here's a pair of mittens from Mother Goose to begin with. (*Hands them to SANTA CLAUS.*)

SANTA. (*Trying them on*). Just what I've been wanting. My old ones are all worn out.

TAFFY. And here's a new cap from Jack Spratt.

SANTA. (*tries it on.*) Just my fit, too.

TAFFY. And here's some silver bells and cockle shells from Mistress Mary.

(*Other presents may be mentioned with short, appropriate remarks by SANTA CLAUS.*)

TAFFY. And here's a pair of carpet slippers from Pumpkin Eater.

SANTA. That's good. Guess I'll put 'em right on now (*he does so.*) Wal, now I'm all toggged out from head to foot with these presents you've given me, guess I'll take a turn at it myself. Here's a few trinkets I picked up down in the United States on purpose for you youngsters.

CHILDREN. Oh, goody! goody! Santa's brought some presents for us.

MOTHER GOOSE. Wal, while you're a-givin' of 'em out we women folks'll see about the dinner. And don't be too long at it so't the dinner gets cold.

SANTA. Not any longer than necessary, you may be sure of that, but these kiddies must have their dolls and jim cracks at any cost. Now step right up this way, everyone of ye, and see what's in this bag.

(*Children group about SANTA CLAUS, receiving presents, and may close by singing some good Santa Claus song, such as "Jolly Old St. Nicholas."*)

Christmas at Uncle Jerry's

CHARACTERS

UNCLE JERRY	EMMA	FRED
MRS. JERRY	GLADYS	TED
MRS. O'FLAHERTY	HATTIE	GEORGE
MR. PHILLIPS	LOTTIE BURGESS	HENRY
BILLY, the hired man	ALICE	NELLIE BURGESS
ELSIE	DORA	MOLLIE BURGESS

ACT I.

SCENE: A street or room.

(*Enter* ELSIE, R., EMMA, GLADYS, HATTIE, ALICE *and* DORA *at L.*)

ELSIE. Oh, girls, you are just the ones I want to see.

EMMA. Are we? Well, then take a good, long look at us.

GLADYS. Of course we're not very pretty, but if you want to see us so bad, why—

ELSIE. You know perfectly well what I mean. I've got the loveliest bit of news.

GIRLS. Oh—news? What is it? Do tell us!

ELSIE. I know you'll be perfectly delighted to hear it. It's a letter from Mr. Slocum and he's invited us all to a Christmas party to be held at his home on Christmas Day.

ALL. Mr. Slocum? Who's he?

ELSIE. Have you all forgotten Uncle Jerry, at whose home we spent a part of last summer?

ALL. O—oh—Uncle Jerry! Of course we remember him.

HATTIE. But we'd forgotten his last name was Slocum.

ALICE. And we remember Mrs. Jerry, too.

DORA. And we remember how we helped her feed the chickens and ducks and—

EMMA. And how we used to help Uncle Jerry and Billy, the hired man, get in the hay and—

GLADYS. Well, do tell us all about the Christmas party. I'm just dying to hear about it.

ALL. Yes, do tell us.

ELSIE. I was trying to tell you, but you wouldn't let me. Here's the letter. I'll read it to you if you'll listen. (*Reads.*)

Blankville, December 15.

Dear Miss Elsie:

Mother Slocum wants me to write and ask you all to come out here for a little party on Christmas Day. Just write and tell us if you can come and I'll meet you at the train with my big sleigh on Christmas mornin'.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas,

Yours truly,

UNCLE JERRY.

ALL. Isn't that glorious!

HATTIE. Dee-lightful!

GLADYS. It's just dandy, that's what it is.

EMMA. Let's give three cheers for Uncle Jerry and Mrs. Jerry.

ALICE. All right. Here goes! Hip, hip, hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah for Mr. Slocum!

(*Enter Boys.*)

TED. Gee whillikens! What's the racket?

GEORGE. What's the matter with the gentleman?

GIRLS. Nothing. He's all right.

FRED. Who's all right?

GIRLS. Uncle Jerry.

GEORGE. Oh, is it Uncle Jerry you're talking about? What's he been up to?

EMMA. You'd never guess in the wide world.

HENRY. Probably bought a new cow.

TED. Or sold his Brahma rooster.

FRED. Or built a chimney on his pig pen.

ALICE. A chimney on his pig pen, you goosey.

GEO. Well what is it then?

GLADYS. It's about Christmas.

TED. Then probably he's sent you all some Christmas post cards.

DORA. Wrong once more. He's sent a letter and wants us all to come out to his house for a Christmas party.

HENRY. Go on! What you giving us?

DORA. It's true. He's going to meet us at the train in his big sleigh.

FRED. (*Singing.*) "Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh." Say! It would be jolly if it were only true.

HENRY. They're just giving us taffy. Look at the twinkle in her eyes.

DORA. It's true just the same. Read the letter, Elsie, and see if they will believe it.

(*ELSIE reads letter.*)

DORA. There, now will you believe us?

TED. Gee! Uncle Jerry's all right.

GEO. He's a good old sport, I knew it all the time.

FRED. Jiminy! Won't we have a bushel of fun.

HENRY. A bushel? We'll have a whole sleigh load of it—and then some.

ELSIE. The question now is—shall we accept the invitation? I'll have to let him know.

FRED. Shall we accept it? What do you mean by asking such a nonsensical question? Of course we accept it. Eh, boys?

BOYS. We should say *yes*.

HENRY. Anybody would be out of his head not to accept such an invitation as that.

ELSIE. And how about you girls?

GIRLS. Yes! yes! Of course we accept.

DORA. You don't think for one minute that we'd refuse, do you?

ELSIE. Well, then it's unanimous and I'll answer his letter today.

FRED. And say! Would you mind suggesting the fact that we're all very fond of roast turkey.

GEO. And plum pudding.

GLADYS. And say! Wouldn't it be nice if we should take along some nice presents for Uncle Jerry and Mrs. Jerry and Billy?

ALL. Good scheme! Just the thing! Capital idea! Bully!

TED. What'll we take?

GLADYS. I'm sure I don't know. We've got several days to think it over.

GEO. Well, let's think of some real good ones while we're about it.

FRED. That's right, because you see we're going to have the jolliest Christmas ever.

“As over the river and through the wood
To Uncle Jerry's house we go.”
“Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way.”

EMMA. For pity's sake! What kind of a poem do you call that?

FRED. A conglomerated poem.

EMMA. Just what I thought.

HENRY. Now let's give another three cheers for Mr. and Mrs. Jerry because you know we boys didn't have a chance before.

TED. Go ahead then.

HENRY. Hip! Hip!

ALL. Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

(All sing.)

“Jingle bells, jingle bells,
Jingle all the way.
Oh what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh.”

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE: Living room at home of Uncle Jerry. (*Mrs. S. is discovered at work about the room*).

MRS. S. (*Looking at clock*). I wonder if 'tain't most time for pa to be gettin' here with them young folks. Seem's if he'd been gone long enough to fetch a couple of loads. I reckon 'twont be very lonesome when they do get here. They're 'bout as lively a lot of boys an' gals as I ever sot eyes on—an' such appetites as they've got. My land! How they did uster pitch into the eatables when they was out here in the summer, specially the boys. Couldn't hardly keep enough cooked ahead to fill 'em up. But land! I didn't mind, I liked to see 'em eat. Well, I callate I've got enough this time to satisfy 'em. That's all Mrs. O'Flaherty an' I've been doin' for most three days—jest bakin' pies an' cookies an' tarts an'—

(*NAPOLEON tumbles into room.*)

NAP. Hi gracious!

MRS. S. Good land o' livin'! How you scart me, Napoleon. Is that the way you come into folks houses?

NAP. Yes mum—dat is, no mum. Yo' see, I done slipped on dat ol' step an' heah I is.

MRS. S. Land! I hope you didn't get hurt.

NAP. Yes mum—I hopes so, dat is— I hopes I didn't. Hain't had time yet to see if I is or if I isn't. (*Takes hold of head and moves it back and forth to right and left, straightens arms, etc.*) No'm, guess dar ain't nuffin' out of kilter.

MRS. S. I'm awful glad of that. Did you come over after something, Napoleon?

NAP. Yes um, Mis' Burgess done sent me ober to tell yo' "Merry Christmas" an' to ax if she can borrow yo' egg puncher.

MRS. S. Land sakes! You mean my egg beater. Wal, go out into the kitchen an' tell Mrs. O'Flaherty to let you take it.

NAP. Yes um.

MRS. S. An' say, Napoleon, you might tell the gals to come over this afternoon. We're expectin' them city boys an' gals out here to spend the day.

NAP. What? All dem young fellers wat was heah las' summer?

MRS. S. Yes pa's after 'em now. You can come over too, if you want to, Napoleon.

NAP. Hi golly! Yo' jes' bet I'll 'cept dat invitation suah nuff. (*Dances out of room.*)

MRS. S. It does beat all pa ain't got here yet. I hope he ain't had no accident. If he has—(*Sound of singing outside.—any lively Christmas song.*) Wal, there they be now. (*Voice outside calls "Whoa, Dobbin! Whoa, Nell!"*)

(*Enter boys and girls.*)

ALL. Merry Christmas, Mrs. Jerry! Merry Christmas, Mrs. Jerry.

MRS. S. Wal, wal, I declare! You look as natural as ever.

ALL. And so do you, Mrs. Jerry! We're real glad you invited us.

UNCLE J. (*head at door*). Now all of ye make yourselves to hum while I go'n take care of old Dobbin an' Nell. (*Exit.*)

MRS. S. Take off your things, every one of ye. We want ye all to have a real good time.

HENRY. We're going to have a good time all right. Trust us for that.

MRS. S. I don't doubt you one bit.

ALICE. Oh say, Mrs. Jerry! How are the chickens?

EMMA. And the ducks?

FRED. And the roast turkey—that is—I mean the old gobbler you used to have?

MRS. S. Land sakes! Hain't you forgot about them? They're gettin' along, splendid.

TED. Where's Billy, Mrs. Jerry?

GIRLS. Oh yes, where is Billy?

MRS. S. Dear me, I dunno. Probably he's out to the barn helpin' pa with the horses.

(*Enter UNCLE JERRY.*)

MRS. S. Seen anything of Billy, pa?

UNCLE J. Yep, he's comin' right along. (*Looking outside.*) Hurry up, Billy, the young folks want to see you.

(*Enter BILLY.*)

BILLY. Want to see me? Wal, by hokey! If this ain't a sight. Here's the whole bunch. How be ye all anyway? (*All crowd around him and try to shake hands at once.*) Whee! Don't pull my arm off. Reckon I may want to use it again sometime for pitchin' hay, or something like that.

HATTIE. Say! We can pitch hay all right.

UNCLE J. I should say so. You're capital hands at it.

MRS. S. An' for feedin' the chickens an' pigs, too.

UNCLE J. Wal, what's the program to amuse these young folks while dinner's gettin' ready.

ALICE. I know. Let's get Mr. Billy to sing for us.

BILLY. What, me? Sing? Say, you wouldn't want me to scare ye out of a year's growth, would ye?

GLADYS. We know you can sing because you sang for us last summer in the hayfield.

BILLY. Tell ye what—I'll make a dicker with ye. You sing one of your school songs an' I'll try to sing something for ye provided I can get Uncle Jerry to help me.

ALL. We'll agree to that.

BILLY. What d'ye say to it, Uncle Jerry?

UNCLE J. Callate I can make a noise if I don't do much singin'.

BILLY. All ready, then. Here goes!

(*They sing any lively song. Children applaud.*)

FRED. Now it's our turn. What shall we sing?

DORA. Let's sing——.

(*All sing any Christmas song.*)

BILLY. Gosh! That was finer'n a silk shirt.

UNCLE J. Jest what I was thinkin' myself, Billy.

MRS. S. Jest think, pa, if we could only have sung like that when we was their age.

UNCLE J. Wouldn't been no need of goin' to singin' school, eh?

MRS. S. Wal, now I'll have to go'n help about the dinner. I s'pose they're all hungry as bears.

UNCLE J. While you're doin' that I'll go'n fetch a pail of water from the well.

BILLY. That makes me think—I've got to water the hosses.

UNCLE J. After dinner they'll all be wantin' to see that tree.

ALICE. Oh, have you got a tree?

UNCLE J. Wal, I should remark.

MRS. S. Now pa, you shouldn't—

UNCLE J. What? Shouldn't remark?

MRS. S. I mean you shouldn't tell everything. I kinder thought we'd surprise 'em.

UNCLE J. Wal, what's the difference? They'll find it out some time or other.

MRS. O'F. (*outside.*) Be yez comin out to help me wid the dinner, mum?

MRS. S. Yes, I'm comin'.

(*Exeunt* UNCLE J., MRS. S. and BILLY.)

GEO. Gee! This is some Christmas. First a dandy sleigh-ride, then roast turkey for dinner and——

ELSIE. If we get it.

GEO. And a Christmas tree to cap the climax. I'll bet "dollars to doughnuts," as pa says, "that the tree's right in that room. (*Peeps in.*) Yes, there it is! Look!

(*All look in, giving exclamation of joy.*)

FRED. Now we'd better hustle an' put our presents on the tree before anybody comes.

ALICE. Where are they anyway?

FRED. I gave them to Dora.

DORA. I gave them to Hattie.

HATTIE. I gave them to Henry.

HENRY (*trying to think*). Well now what in blazes did I do with them, I'd like to know.

FRED. Gee! You're a dandy if you've gone and lost those presents.

GIRLS. Oh dear! What'll we do?

HENRY. I know now—I put 'em in my overcoat pocket.

GIRLS. Sh—! Somebody's coming.

(*Enter* UNCLE JERRY.)

UNCLE J. (*looking around the room.*) Now ain't that the blamdest thing. I can't find my specks nowhere.

ELSIE. They're on the top of your head, Uncle Jerry.

UNCLE J. Wal, wal, so they be. (*Exit.*)

TED. Find 'em, Henry?

HENRY. Which? The specks?

TED. Shucks, no!—the presents.

HENRY. Yes, here they are. (*Comes forward with packages.*)

ELSIE. Then let's get busy and put them on the tree.

(*They go cautiously from room.*)

EMMA. Be careful you don't knock anything off.

HATTIE. And don't peek.

ALICE. Sh—! Hurry up! Somebody's coming now.

(*They re-enter quickly and take seats as UNCLE JERRY enters.*)

UNCLE J. Wal, now everybody come to dinner and bring your appetites along with ye.

FRED. All right, Uncle Jerry, we're coming.

ALL. Hurrah for the Christmas dinner.

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE: Uncle Jerry's parlor. A Christmas tree with decorations stands in one corner.

Boys and girls may be seated, singing, or playing "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush."

(*Enter UNCLE J. and MRS. S.*)

UNCLE J. Wal, wal, you young folks are happy as kings, an' I'm glad of it. Wonder if 'tain't most time for us to see what's on the tree?

SEVERAL. Yes! yes!

UNCLE J. Wal, the first thing I want to tell ye that mother Slocum is responsible for it all. She's set her heart on makin' this a great surprise for ye, an' I hope she's succeeded.

ALL. She certainly has.

UNCLE J. Wal, we'll begin with—

(*Enter MRS. O'FLAHERTY followed by NELLIE, LOTTIE and MOLLIE.*)

MRS. O'F. Faix an' here's three more young ladies for the party.

MRS. S. Come right along in, girls. (*to others*) I s'pose you recollect Nellie an' Lottie and Mollie Burgess, don't ye?

ALICE. Of course we do. We're glad to see you.

NELLIE, LOTTIE AND MOLLIE. And we're glad to see you, too.

(*Enter NAPOLEON.*)

GEO. And if there isn't Napoleon the Great.

BOYS. Why, hello, Napoleon!

NAP. Hi gracious! I'se mighty rejuberated to see you all. (*Boys crowd around and shake his hand.*) But lawdy sakes! Look out! Youse done bustin' my collar bone, yo' is.

HENRY. Not quite as bad as that, Napoleon.

NAP. Well, den if you ain't busted it you'se done twisted it all out of respectability, so yo' has. (*Sits down and examines arm.*)

UNCLE J. Wal, now we'll begin where we left off. (*A knock.*)

MRS. O'F. Begorra, it's Sim Phillips acomin' to the Christmas party.

UNCLE J. Come in, Sim.

(*Enter MR. PHILLIPS.*)

MR. P. Howdy, Uncle Jerry, howdy! I come over to see about that ere hoss trade.

UNCLE J. Can't do it today, Sim. Today's Christmas, you know.

MR. P. Christmas be hanged! Who cares for Christmas?

UNCLE J. Who cares for it? Wal, jest cast your eyes around this room an' mebbe you'll see some folks that care for it.

MR. P. Humph! All fol-de-rol.

UNCLE J. Wal, do set down an' make yourself to hum. Now let's see where was I at.

MRS. O'F. Faix an' yez was jist beginnin'.

UNCLE J. That's so. (*A knock at door.*) Wal, I'll be blowed. Come in.

(Enter BILLY as Santa.)

ALL. Ho! Ho! It's Santa Claus! Howdy do, Mr. Santa Claus.

BILLY. Howdy do, young folks. Glad to see you. (*He shakes hands around.*)

UNCLE J. Now I callate I'll have some help. (UNCLE J. and BILLY proceed to distribute gifts.)

FRED. (*looking at his gift.*) Oh look! It's old-fashioned molasses candy—the real stuff!

TED. Say, this is great!

UNCLE J. Now, what in tunket is this? Here's something for you, ma. (*Hands package to her.*)

MRS. S. For me?

UNCLE J. Yep, for Mrs. Slocum.

MRS. S. Wal, sakes alive. What can it be. (*Unwraps it.*) Look, pa, it's a gold breast pin. Ain't it pretty?

BILLY. An' here's a present for Mr. Jerry Slocum.

UNCLE J. (*receiving package and proceeds to unwrap.*) Wal, of all things! A bill book! That's mighty thoughtful, though tain't many bills I have to put in it.

BILLY. Now here's one for Napoleon Bonaparte Johnson. (*hands jumping-jack to NAPOLEON.*)

NAP. Fo' me? (*Tries it.*) Golly dat am de greates' jumper I ebber seed.

UNCLE J. An' here's a pipe for Billy.

HENRY. For Mr. Billy Santy Claus.

UNCLE J. Wal, I swan to goodness! Be you Santa Claus, Billy?

TED. Sure he is. We knew him soon's he came in.

OTHERS. Sure! We all knew him.

BILLY. I'll have to own up. You see everybody was doin' so much that I jest thought of this little stunt.

BOYS AND GIRLS. You're all right, Mr. Billy.

(*They join in singing any Santa Claus song.*)

ALICE. Say, folks, do you know this is the jolliest Christmas we've ever had.

BOYS. It's the best ever.

GIRLS. And so say I—and I.

MR. P. An' me too'

UNCLE J. What you, Sim?

MR. P. Yes, I've come to the conclusion as I've watched you here jest now that mebbe Christmas is a mighty good thing after all, an' I'm goin' to do my part to spread Christmas cheer throughout this community.

MRS. O'F. Good for yez, Mister Phillips!

NAP. Bully fo' de ol' miser.

MR. P. Not a miser any longer, Napoleon.

UNCLE J. I congratulate you on your change of heart, Sim.

MRS. S. An' I'm awful glad if you're all happy an' that your hearts are filled with Christmas cheer, an' this only goes to show that we little know what glorious fruits our little deeds of kindness may bring forth.

(Children start some lively Christmas song and all join in chorus.)

CURTAIN.

Christmas Cheer

By Mayme C. Wyant.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS (boy or girl) is dressed in red and green costume with holly wreath on head; or a gold, silver, or frosty-white suit or dress, and wearing a crown to match, having a star on a high point at front of crown.

NORTH WIND (boy or girl) flowing costume of gray or white, all edges slashed into fringe, and long streamers of self-color tissue paper fluttering from sleeves and cap. If possible, the breeze from an electric fan or blower (*concealed from the view of the audience*) is turned upon NORTH WIND until the SNOW FLAKES enter; and the violinist may play wierdly up and down the scale.

SNOW FLAKES (eight small children) wear white cotton-flannel jackets (crepe paper will do), cut in points at lower edge. Wear black gathered skirts, lower edge cut in deep points with a ball of white fluffy cotton or wool fastened on each point and notch. Pin more of the white balls on skirts if desired. Black pointed cap with white ball at end. Black or white stockings.

(While these SNOW FLAKES dance, the actors behind the dark curtains should toss over the top of curtains artificial

snow. The "snow" may be white *tissue paper* clipped fine; and small bits of cotton batting should be mixed with that portion which is to fall upon the evergreen trees. If more convenient, the snow may be blown over the top of the dark curtains out of long paper funnels.)

FATHER and MOTHER are dressed as ordinary modern couple.

CHILDREN wear white sleeping garments.

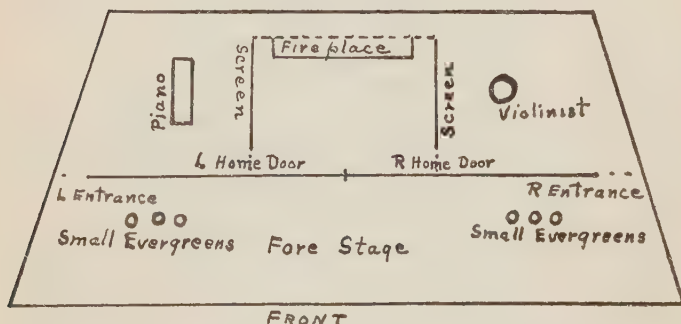
NURSE wears ordinary nurse-maid costume.

ORPHAN GIRL wears white night gown over which is winter coat.

SANTA CLAUS is dressed as usual.

CAROL SINGERS wear their out-of-door wraps.

STAGE PLAN



Two plain dark curtains are stretched across the stage about half way down and coming together at center. White stars are pinned onto the upper one-third of each curtain. The actors enter from behind the dark curtains at L. and R. The portion of stage back of dark curtain is divided into three sections by screens which extend from front to rear. The middle section is the "Home."

"Home" is decorated and furnished as a room in a modern home at Christmas time with a fireplace at the rear. There should be a telephone in the "Home" and a Christmas tree if desired.

(As the play begins the dark curtains are closed; fore-stage very dimly lighted, and "Silent Night, Holy Night" is played softly, as violin solo, behind the dark curtains.)

(Enter SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS—L.)

SPIRIT (looking about puzzled).

Somehow, somehow things don't look just right here,
Seems rather dull and dark for this season of the year.

(Enter NORTH WIND skipping and waving arms up and down.)

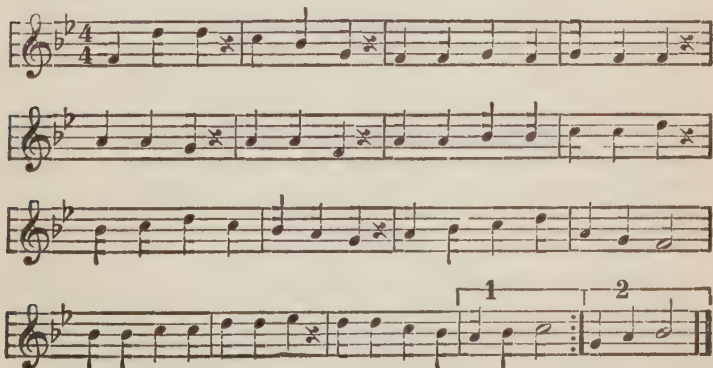
NORTH WIND (to SPIRIT). And who are you in my pathway?

SPIRIT. I am the Spirit of Christmas. Long, long ago I came into the world, but you see I am still quite young! That is because I am so full of joy and love. But somehow it looks rather gloomy around here.

NORTH WIND. I see what you mean. I think I can do something to help you make the world lighter and brighter tonight. Come, come, little Snow Flakes.

(Enter SNOW FLAKES skipping. One-half the number come L. others R., meeting at center. All remain spaced a foot apart.)

NORTH WIND (singing with "snap," but not too fast for the action as indicated. Violinist alone accompanies, behind curtain.)



Snow Flakes up (*hands up quickly, arms at full length*).

Snow Flakes down (*arms down*).

Snow Flakes 'round and 'round and 'round (*each whirls in his place*).

Snow Flakes bright, Snow Flakes white (*stop whirling*).

Help old Santa Claus tonight.

CHORUS

(*During both choruses FLAKES hippety hop in figure eight.*)

Dancing gaily in the air,
Follow, follow everywhere,
Making white each field and tree,
Emblem of Christ's purity.

(*Action same as in stanza one in following stanza.*)

Snow Flakes light Christmas night,
Bringing us a story bright
Of a star far away
Where the little Jesus lay.

CHORUS

Whirling, whirling here and there,
Frolic, frolic everywhere,
Make the earth all pure and white;
Teaching us good will tonight.

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS. That is fine! That *does* help some. But promise me before you blow on across the land that you will not stay too long in any one place, or try too hard to get into people's houses. See, this one is all dark. It lets out no light, for the shutters are all closed tightly to keep you out.

NORTH WIND (*laughing*). O, yes. I do see what you mean. I shall blow on my way now. And you might remind them (*pointing to the "Home"*) that I have gone, if you like.

(*Exit R.*)

(*SPIRIT opens curtains slightly at center, and peeps into Home.*)

SPIRIT (*speaking to people in Home*). Good people, do not be startled! I am the Spirit of Christmas. You may

not realize it, but you are under my power tonight. Your home, every home with its happy faces is the best evidence of my power and the best emblem of Him whose birth we love to celebrate at the Christmas time. But do not keep the light of your home hidden from view. See! It is not so cold outside now. The wind has ceased to blow. So open the curtains, and let the light of your home radiate to make the world brighter. Now don't forget (*warningly*). Good night to you—but *not Goodbye*.

(*Exit L.*)

(*The FATHER and MOTHER open the two dark curtains far enough to show the whole of Home, well lighted. Three or four small children in white sleeping garments are waiting near the MOTHER. Seated. she tells them, very simply and clearly, the Christmas story; while FATHER hangs stockings by the fireplace.*)

(*Enter NURSE—R.*)

(*NURSE waits near FATHER while MOTHER repeats prayer with children.*)

MOTHER (*repeating line by line the following prayer, and children repeating in unison after her*).

Dear Heavenly Father hear our prayer,
We thank thee for thy loving care,
For Christmas time with all the joys
It brings to little girls and boys.

Help us to mind our parents true,
Be kind to all our neighbors too;
Take care of us through all the night,
And wake us with thy morning light.

(*CHILDREN exit with NURSE left home door.*)

(*Enter ORPHAN GIRL—L.*)

CHILD (*stepping into light of Home*). If you please, may I look into your barn?

FATHER and MOTHER. Our barn!

CHILD. Yes, I just want to look in a minute. I won't hurt anything.

(FATHER and MOTHER look at each other in astonishment.)

CHILD. But if you—don't want me to—(*She draws her coat about her as if cold, and steps back into the semi-darkness*).

FATHER. Mother! Don't let her go. How cold she was!

MOTHER (*shocked, but aroused suddenly*). Well, maybe we'd better not let her go until we find out whose child she is, or something.

(*She brings back the girl, who stands at MOTHER'S knee bashful, but hopeful.*)

MOTHER. Tell me, child, what it is you want; and whose girl are you?

CHILD. Oh, I am not anybody's girl. I stay at that big house away over there (*pointing*).

MOTHER. Why didn't you keep on staying there then?

CHILD. I just wanted to peep into some barns is all.

(MOTHER and FATHER look at each other beginning to understand.)

MOTHER. But why? Tell us about it. Don't be afraid.

CHILD. Its nothing much. Only its Christmas, and that other Christmas a lovely lady came and sang and told us about the baby Jesus in a manger in a barn. She told us how the angels sang. And she said if we'd be good all the while, maybe by the next Christmas we could get to see the little baby in a manger.

FATHER (*astounded*). Well, wouldn't that freeze you!

CHILD. Oh—yes! It is too cold. I better go back now, I guess maybe I wasn't quite good enough anyhow.

MOTHER (*taking Child up onto her lap*). Listen to me little girl. (*Turning to husband.*) Bob, you tell her.

FATHER. No, you're all right. Go ahead, only make it very simple and plain.

MOTHER. All right, I'll try. (*To child.*) Do you want me to tell you some more of the story about the baby Jesus?

CHILD. Yes.

MOTHER (*slowly and thoughtfully*). The baby didn't stay little, you know. He grew up to be a man, a good, kind man; and he told everyone else how to be good too.

CHILD. Oh, then maybe the lady didn't know how babies do grow up. 'Cause she said we might see the baby Jesus sometime.

MOTHER (*slowly, earnestly*). She was right, dear. *This* is what she meant. She meant if you are good and kind all the while, then other people learn from you how to be good and kind too. Then there would be so many people all around you trying to be the same way Jesus was, that it would be about like *seeing Him*, don't you think?

CHILD. Yes, it would be. And the more the people tried to be good, the more they would get to be like Him; wouldn't they?

MOTHER. Yes.

(MOTHER looks at her husband, smiling. The child follows her gaze, smiling too. This tableau is held during the carol which follows.)

(Enter group of carol singers, L. They stop in front of the left dark curtain before they come into the light from Home. A group of singers sing "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night" or "Christ is Born in Bethlehem." Exit—L.)

CHILD (*leaping to center of room, face aglow, arms extended wide, coat falling back*). It's the song the lady told about! Its the angel's song, I know, I know!

MOTHER (*kneeling by child*). Bob! She has nothing on under her coat but a little night dress! No wonder she was cold.

(Telephone rings.)

FATHER (*at telephone*). Yes.—Oh, a child missing?—Is it a girl?—Yes.—No, that will not be necessary, I think. I believe the child is here with us now.—What's that?—Oh, yes. We will keep her until then. (*Hangs up receiver.*)

FATHER (*to wife who has been holding CHILD but listening to the telephone conversation*). From the Orphan's Home. Was that all right—what I said?

MOTHER. Of course. You call Katie.

(Enter NURSEMAID, through right Home door, when called.)

MOTHER. Give this little Christmas Carol a warm bath, and tuck her into the other bed in the nursery. She is our Christmas guest.

(Exit NURSE and CHILD through left Home door, watched until out of view by MOTHER and FATHER.)

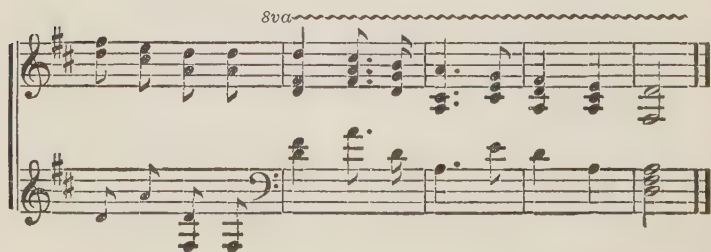
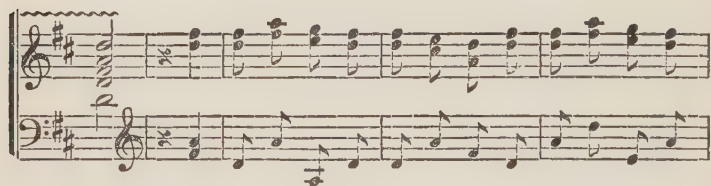
MOTHER (to FATHER, slowly and with feeling). On Christmas eve! It was a glimpse of Him!

(Chimes begin at once.)

FATHER. The Christmas bells.

(Exit FATHER and MOTHER slowly during chimes, through right Home door.)

(The chimes are given below. The first score should be played slowly, on the piano, to imitate cathedral chimes as nearly as possible; the second score is faster to imitate ordinary church bells; and the third score, same as the first.)



(Enter CHILDREN, including ORPHAN, left Home door, as soon as chimes cease.)

FIRST CHILD. Has he been here yet?

SECOND CHILD (examining empty stocking at fireplace). No. not yet!

FIRST CHILD. Let's sing, so it will not seem so long to wait.

(All sing assisted by violinist accompanying, back of screen, but near them.)



Jolly, jolly Santa dear!
We are glad when he draws near;
Bringing cheer and fun and toys,
To the waiting girls and boys.
He will come for we've been good;
We have done the best we could.
With a pack upon his back,
He'll come tumbling down ker! whack!

(Each child stamps foot after "ker" and after "whack.")

(One child starts toward chimney to peer up, but Santa comes tumbling quickly and noisily out of fireplace with his pack of treats for all children present.)

CURTAIN.

